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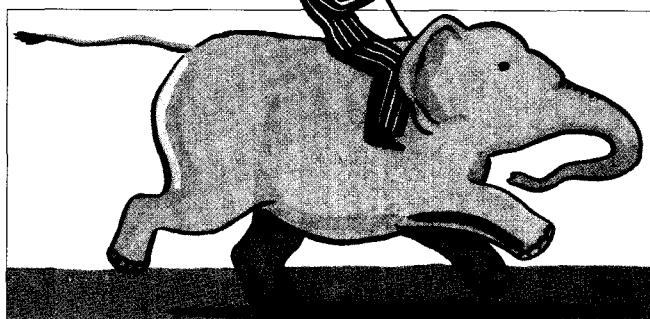
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ARTIST: EVGENY MITTA, RUSSIAN, BORN 1962 (MOSCOW)

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745 BOYLSTON STREET

HANS Koning's article in this issue, "Germania Irredenta," about a lingering German desire for lost properties and territories, offers a reminder of the constancy of German preoccupations—and of why so much of the rest of the world has for so long been preoccupied with those preoccupations.

The evolution of the modern German state out of a clutch of principalities occurred entirely within the lifetime of *The Atlantic Monthly*, and writers in our pages have closely followed the consequences. The first issue appeared in 1857, the year Prussia's King Friedrich Wilhelm IV lost his mind—an event that fatefully shifted the succession (to the Kaiser Wilhelm I and II branch) and heralded the rise of Bismarck. An *Atlantic* correspondent reported in 1861, "The unity of Germany as one nation has never stood a better chance of being realized than now." The Reich came into being in 1871. Within a few decades the articles became distinctly more ominous, with celebrations of Germany's growing scientific, cultural, and industrial might giving way to admonitory explorations of "The German Mind." A few years after Germany's defeat in the First World War the theologian Reinhold Niebuhr published a prophetic essay titled "Germany and Modern Civilization," in which he urged the study of Germany upon those seeking to understand contemporary civilization: "Nowhere will they

discover the forces which contend for mastery in a modern state more clearly defined or the moral impotence of modern industrial civilization more obviously revealed."

A year after German armies overran the Netherlands, in 1940, Hans Koning, who had been born in Amsterdam and was then aged seventeen, escaped to England by means of an underground network through France and neutral Spain. He served with the Royal Artillery and as a commando in the British Army in France, in the Netherlands, and in the British zone in occupied Germany. Later, with some years of university (Zurich, the Sorbonne) behind him, he worked as the editor of a weekly newspaper in Amsterdam and as a radio producer in Indonesia. From Indonesia he traveled on a Dutch freighter to the United States, where he published his first novel, *The Affair* (1958). He has since published about twenty books, some of them growing out of his work during the 1960s as a reporter for *The New Yorker*. Among his best-known novels are *A Walk With Love and Death* (1961) and *The Kleber Flight* (1981). Koning is an inveterate traveler who has reported from China, Russia, Cuba, Mexico, and Egypt, and from all over Europe, frequently including Germany. All his work—novels, journalism, and travel writing alike—is informed by political sensitivity and a strong moral edge. —THE EDITORS

CONTRIBUTORS

Brian Cronin (cover art) is an illustrator who lives in New York City. His work has appeared in *Time*, *The New York Times*, and *The New Yorker*.

Francis Davis ("Like Young"), a contributing editor of *The Atlantic*, is the author of *The History of the Blues* (1995) and *Bebop and Nothingness* (1996), a collection of essays.

Deborah Fallows ("Buffed and Polished") has written for *National Geographic*, *The Washington Monthly*, and *The Los Angeles Times Magazine*.

Mary Graham ("High Resolution, Unresolved") is a lawyer and writer who lives in Washington, D.C.

Brad Holland ("Express Yourself: It's Later Than You Think"), an artist, has received gold medals from the Art Directors Club of New York and the Society of Publication Designers. His article in this issue appears in somewhat different form in the

book *Illustration America*, to be published this month by Rockport Press.

Wendy Kaminer ("The Latest Fashion in Irrationality") is a contributing editor of *The Atlantic* and a public-policy fellow at Radcliffe College. Her essay collection *True Love Waits* was published last spring.

Carol Kino ("Living-Room Galleries") is a former New York correspondent for the British quarterly *Modern Painters*. She has written about art for *The New York Times*, *Artnews*, and *Art & Auction*.

Hans Koning ("Germania Irredenta") is at work on a novel, *Night and Day*, to be published next year.

Robert A. Levine ("The Economic Consequences of Mr. Clinton"), a senior economist emeritus at the Rand Corporation, was deputy director of the Congressional Budget Office from 1975 to 1979.

Thomas Lux ("He Has Lived in Many Houses") teaches writing at Sarah Lawrence College and is the author of *Split Horizon* (1994).

Florence Cassen Mayers ("All-American Sestina") is a poet whose work has appeared in *The Paris Review*, *Epoch*, and *Poetry*.

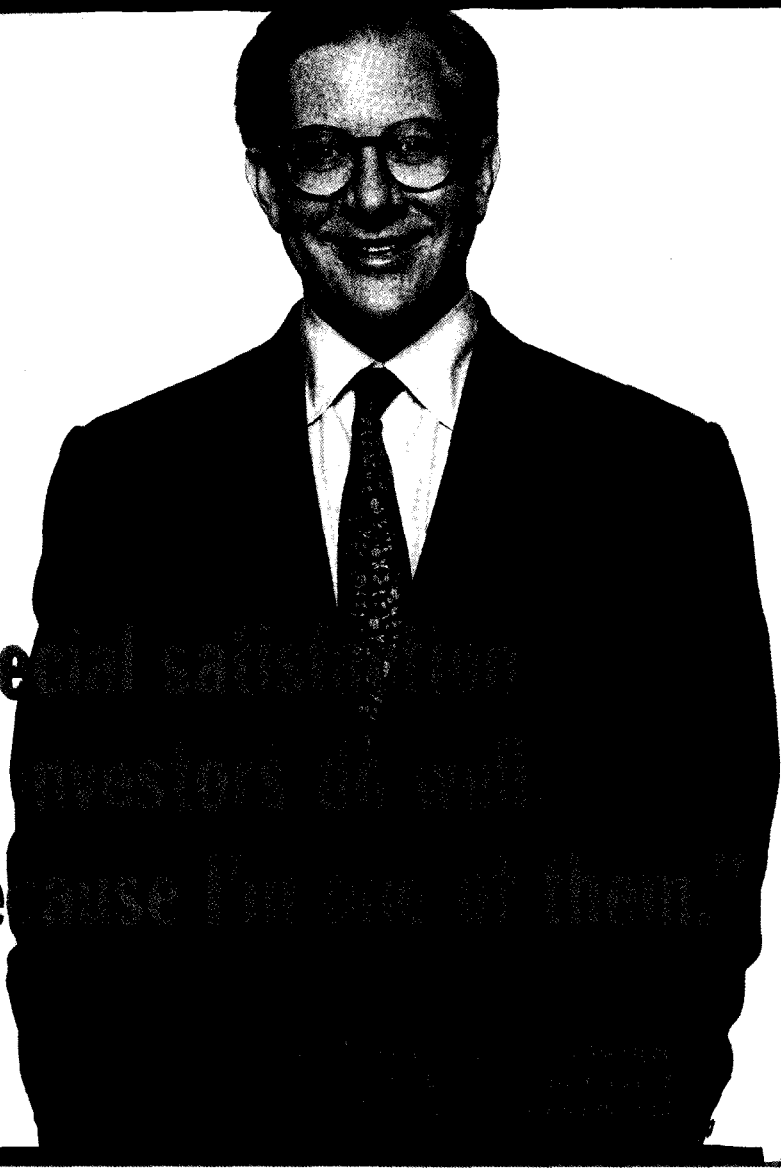
Thomas I. Palley ("The Forces Making for an Economic Collapse") teaches economics at the New School for Social Research, in New York City. He is the author of *Post Keynesian Macroeconomics*, to be published this year.

Richard Rubin ("Welcome to Our Tomb") has recently been published in *The New Yorker*, the *Oxford American*, and *The Southern Review*.

Steven Stark ("Gap Politics") writes about politics and popular culture and is a commentator on National Public Radio.

Charles Thompson ("Robert Penn McNerney") is the fiction and book editor of *American Way* magazine. He has written for *Spy*, *Mademoiselle*, and *The Oregonian*.

Mark Walters ("Spring") teaches literature and creative writing at William Jewell College, in Liberty, Missouri.



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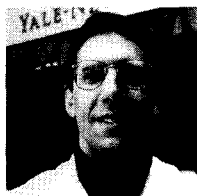
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At the Yale Medical School in New Haven, Ct., Dr. William Rosenblatt, an anesthesiologist, has devised a method of recovering medical supplies for developing countries. It is routine American

procedure to lay out any surgical supplies which may become necessary during an operation. These are discarded afterward, used or not. Dr. Rosenblatt's system provides for the recovery of the unused items for distribution to needy hospitals worldwide. He places the potential recovery at \$200 million in materials a year and will use his Award to promote his program, encouraging all major American hospitals to adopt it.



In the remotest villages of Senegal, Sanoussi Diakité is reviving the cultivation of a traditional cereal. "Fonio is such an easy crop to grow. It flourishes in poor soil, with little rainfall," he

says. "But unfortunately, husking it is so laborious that these days few women bother to prepare it." Diakité, a mechanical engineer, has single-handedly invented a husking machine which prepares two kilos of grain in just six minutes, a task which takes an hour by hand. The Award will enable Diakité to build more machines for distribution around West Africa, and he hopes ultimately to restore the popularity of this nutritious foodstuff.



In the Kara Kum Desert where British archaeologist Dr. Georgina Herrmann now excavates, the Great Silk Road once passed. It was this which made the

now-ruined site of Merv in Turkmenistan one of the greatest urban complexes of the medieval world. "Merv was a series of cities, built side by side," says Dr. Herrmann, "which makes it unique." Having put together one of the largest archaeological expeditions in Central Asia, she has already established that "watered," or "Damascus," steel was being produced here by a complex industrial process centuries earlier than previously thought. Dr. Herrmann will use her Award to fund further excavations and to record and preserve Merv's historic treasures.



Beneath an acacia tree in the mountains of East Africa, Masai elders ceded Dr. Royce Hall land to build an eye hospital. Now the Masai are helping him to build it, and some will receive paramedical

training to help him run it, too. In Tanzania and Kenya half-a-million people are blind, often through cataracts, but Dr. Hall, an American ophthalmologist, says that once the hospital is open "we will be able to restore sight to 3,000 people a year." His Award will be put toward the construction of the hospital – costs which he has so far met without help from outside – and will also help ensure its future.



Refurbishing a historic telescope at the Mt. Wilson Observatory in Los Angeles, Gilbert Clark has given schoolchildren in four continents access to the stars. For while Mt. Wilson is in darkness,

pupils on the other side of the world can pilot the telescope by remote control and observe stars in real time on their computer screens. "Two schools have followed the course of Pluto," Clark mentions, "and their observations are expected to help NASA better understand its orbit." He intends to use his Award to bring further telescopes into the program and hopes ultimately, through the Internet, to reach a wider audience still.



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LETTERS

Mideast Oil Forever?

I am surprised that *The Atlantic Monthly* would print an article written by U.S. Department of Energy employees advertising DOE programs: "Mideast Oil Forever?" by Joseph J. Romm and Charles B. Curtis (April *Atlantic*). I agree that we are "sleepwalking" into what will become a significant energy shortage by 2020. However, the reason that we can't plan ahead and make significant progress on alternative energy sources is that we as a nation insist on believing that the world is as we wish it were rather than as it actually is, so we insist that soft energy sources will be sufficient.

Let's take wind power and photovoltaic (solar) cells as examples. The authors state that with continued public-private partnership in technology advancement, wind could hit three cents per kilowatt-hour by 2020. Good grief, that's twenty-four years away! If we can travel to the moon, how is it we can't make a competitive wind-power machine? How many hundreds of millions of R&D dollars are we talking about spending on this technology in the next twenty-five years? What are we basing this prediction on—blades made of "miraculem" and superconducting generators? Maybe there is a more fundamental problem.

As for photovoltaic cells, the authors indicate that the amount of power sold worldwide has grown from four to eighty megawatts over the past sixteen years and that after 2030 sales could exceed \$100 billion. To start with, eighty megawatts is nothing in the scheme of things, and the year 2030 is so far away that one can only conclude that PVs simply won't be competitive until the world goes through a severe oil shock after oil production peaks. This means that the U.S. consumer will have to suffer a significant increase in his electricity bill before solar becomes attractive. We could do this tomorrow by placing a large tax on oil, gas, and coal in

accordance with their negative environmental impacts. Although this might be an appropriate action, I would rather focus on development in areas that can produce results that will not cause the cost of electricity to quadruple and the economy to go into a tailspin.

Charles Boardman
Saratoga, Calif.

In your otherwise excellent article about renewable energy technologies we were surprised to find no mention of geothermal heating and cooling technology. This technology, by taking advantage of the earth's constant moderate temperature just below the surface, efficiently captures heat in winter and deposits it in the summer. The emerging geothermal industry creates high-skill employment, does not pollute the air, has a short payback period, incurs low operating costs compared with conventional systems, and saves energy dollars. Richard Stockton College, home of the largest closed-loop geothermal system in the world, has saved more than 25 percent annually on heating and cooling bills for its academic buildings. Geothermal is one more way to reduce oil dependency and is deserving of short-term economic nurturing by the federal as well as state governments. In fact, the DOE and the EPA have worked in partnership with the electric-utilities industry and manufacturers to promote geothermal technology, with the hope of investing \$100 million to bring this technology into the mainstream by the year 2000.

Kenneth Harrison
Lynn Stiles
*Geothermal Research Project
Richard Stockton College
Pomona, N.J.*

In "Mideast Oil Forever?" Joseph J. Romm and Charles B. Curtis warn that congressional budget-cutters threaten to end America's leadership in new energy technologies that protect the environ-

ed it open road

a least once a day.



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ment and limit dependency on oil from the unstable Persian Gulf region.

Although we agree with the article that environmental protection is crucial and the risks of growing dependence on foreign oil are real, we disagree with the article's focus on renewable sources of energy as the solution. Renewables certainly have a role in America's distant energy future, but the best near-term solution for bridging energy security and environmental protection—with economic growth—is clean, economical, and abundant domestic natural gas.

Natural gas provides about 25 percent of the nation's energy needs today, while renewables contribute only seven percent. The market share for renewables cannot and will not change anytime in the next several decades, even with major increases in government funding, which are required in the Shell scenario cited in the article. Thus renewables can make very little contribution to reducing oil imports or improving the environment in our lifetime. However, the American Gas Association estimates that natural gas could replace one million barrels of imported oil a day by 2000 and two million barrels a day by 2010, given a concerted national effort to convert factories, homes, and particularly vehicles to natural gas—and would simultaneously result in environmental benefits.

To offer a balanced view of the DOE's valuable research-and-development program, the article needed to recognize the significant contributions that can be made by its natural-gas programs, which have been underfunded for years. In these times of budget constraints, the DOE should focus on research and technology that show promise for reducing oil imports in the more immediate future and offer a rapid payback for the American consumer. That means natural gas.

Michael Baly III
President and CEO
American Gas Association
Arlington, Va.

Searching for solutions that would allow us to continue to live in sprawling communities and rely almost solely on single-occupant automobiles simply perpetuates all the other problems that reliance on automobiles has brought us. A variety of professionals are beginning to look at different ways to build our cities,

so that people can walk, bicycle, and use public transit, instead of continuing with highly wasteful land-use patterns. It is truly unfortunate that much of the rest of the world is now seeking to emulate our bad transportation-policy decisions of the past eighty years.

Alternative fuels should be seen not as the ultimate goal but as a partial fix in our search to move people without emphasizing one person, one vehicle.

Duncan Watry
San Francisco, Calif.

Your April cover story on the coming energy crisis was worth the year's subscription price, if only for its comprehensive evaluation of how much oil and gas the world will be consuming over the next forty years.

On the supply side, though, the authors did not scratch the surface. The fact is that the earth has not had its surface really scratched at this point in the quest for liquid oil and gas. Of the 700,000 exploratory wells drilled on the planet in the past 140 years, since oil was first discovered in Pennsylvania, 95 percent were drilled in the developed world of North America and Europe, and almost 75 percent of the total in the United States—not including Alaska.

Only five percent of the total were drilled in Latin America, Asia, or Africa—which is to say that India and China will indeed be putting great demands on the world oil supply as they emerge as developing nations. But their people are sitting on vast oceans of oil and gas that have not been discovered, because there has been no exploration in these countries.

Why has there been so much exploration and discovery here? The most important reason is that Americans are the only people on earth who automatically have mineral rights to the surface property they own. Once the countries of the rest of the world begin giving their own citizens these rights, instead of hoarding them for the state, exploration will expand dramatically, and so will discovery.

Jude Wanniski
Morristown, N.J.

Joseph Romm and Charles Curtis reply:

We agree with Michael Baly that natural gas is going to play a key role in meeting our growing demand for energy.

Natural gas is the premier hydrocarbon in our country's fossil-fuel-based energy portfolio, not only because of the efficiency and the economic and environmental benefits of natural gas, but also as part of our effort to reduce our rising national dependence on imported oil. To use Daniel Yergin's phrase, it has become the recognized "prince of hydrocarbons."

The Department of Energy has been out front in supporting the increased use of natural gas in electricity generation, in industrial co-generation and process systems, in residential and commercial heating and cooling technologies, and in natural-gas-vehicle markets. As noted in the article, small gas-fired turbines and fuel cells using natural gas will be essential for the growth of a more broadly distributed and cleaner global electricity system, which is one reason that the department supports their development.

Renewable energy will also play an increasingly important role in the next century. The nation is, however, only slowly recovering from the 90 percent cut in federal funding for renewable energy that occurred in the 1980s. Charles Boardman seems to have missed a key point of our article. We can make and have made a competitive wind-power machine. Rising electricity prices are not required to achieve significant use of renewable energy in the marketplace. Rather, we believe that with continued R&D we will see growth in all forms of renewables even if the price of electricity from traditional sources declines.

Kenneth Harrison and Lynn Stiles are correct that geothermal energy also holds great promise. The geothermal heat pump they describe can both improve the nation's environment and lower our energy bills. It provides exactly the kind of social and economic benefits that make it perfect for the type of public-private partnership the department has been pursuing.

The bottom line is that the demand for energy is going to grow rapidly in the coming decades. A number of fuels and technologies will be used to meet that demand, because different sectors of the economy have different energy needs and different parts of the world have different energy resources. The nation that is the world leader in the development and use of the cleanest and most efficient energy supply and end-use tech-

nologies will create more jobs, have more competitive industries, and enjoy the highest environmental quality of life of any nation in the world. Maintaining that leadership is a key role of the Department of Energy.

Advice & Consent

Nicholas Lemann's discussion of Robert Putnam's "Bowling Alone" ("Kicking in Groups," April *Atlantic*) may have created a new parlor game for those of us who, like Lemann, are skeptical of Putnam's theory. The game is to identify counterexamples of the Putnam scenario.

Three that occurred to me almost immediately were the Adopt-a-Highway program, the banding together of senior citizens for an immense array of activities, and groups espousing environmental causes.

The Adopt-a-Highway program blankets a large part of the United States today. Within it groups assume responsibility for removing litter from specified stretches of roadway, usually two miles each. The roadside signs I have seen identify service clubs, fraternities, sororities, businesses, and families as pickup volunteers. The program began in Texas less than twenty years ago and has spread to every state in the union, without the benefit of a national association or federal intervention. In Oregon alone more than a thousand groups pick up litter along 3,000 miles of highway. It is difficult to imagine a more direct civic activity.

In the increasingly large numbers of retirement communities (all of the Sun Cities and their clones, for example) residents form groups for all manner of games, crafts, hobbies, and intellectual interests. On a recent visit to Sun City Palm Desert, in California, I noted nearly forty clubs that had been formed by the local population of less than 2,000 people. Whatever it is that these people are interested in doing, they most certainly appear not to desire to do it alone.

Environmental groups, from the long-established Sierra Club to splinter groups of environmental radicals, have grown apace in recent years. The success of The Nature Conservancy in particular is illustrative, depending as it does not only on fundraising and the ef-

forts of paid staff but also on the direct involvement of many volunteers.

Times change. What was important yesterday loses meaning today. The Grange halls and American Legion posts may be nearly empty, but computer-user-group meetings overflow. Americans still group together, but they are also pragmatic to the core, and no longer have the time to spend on ritual and outmoded causes. Instead of drinking at the Elks Club bar, they attend investment-club meetings, and have increasingly deserted the bowling alley in favor of the men's (or women's) association at their local golf course.

I firmly believe, based on Putnam's measure, that America's civic virtue is still intact.

Richard H. Hill
Eugene, Oreg.

R. W. Apple Jr. may be a hell of a travel writer, but on the history of the Weimar Republic he is something less than well-informed ("The Old Made New," April *Atlantic*). Common mistake that it may be, it is not true that the Weimar Republic, as he states, "flourished briefly between the wars and then succumbed to hyperinflation." The infamous Weimar hyperinflation occurred in 1923. After the implementation of the Dawes Plan, in 1924, the German economy did flourish until 1929-1930, when the American-bred Great Depression took hold of Germany's economy. From then until Hitler usurped power, in 1933-1934 (the actual demise of the Weimar Republic), Germany's economic crisis was a depression, or deflation, of the currency along with high unemployment—the condition opposite to inflation!

Probably disillusionment with the German economy lingered from the inflationary crisis into the depression, but the direct economic cause of the Weimar's fall was the latter.

John Mark Krenkel
Heber City, Utah

Editors' Note:

"For Everyman, by Everyman," by David Schiff, an article about Irving Berlin in the March *Atlantic*, should have credited A-R Editions, of Madison, Wisconsin, as the publishers of the three-volume edition of Berlin's songs for the American Musicological Society.



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Arts & Letters

July 4, "Rings: Five Passions in World Art"—an exhibit that forms the cornerstone of the Cultural Olympiad, held in conjunction with this summer's Olympic Games—opens today in Atlanta. It will contain 129 works from around the world, including Rodin's *The Kiss* and Munch's *The Scream*, which are related to five emotions common to art and athletics: love, anguish, triumph, awe, and joy. Previous Cultural Olympiads have been plagued by logistical problems and criticized as awkward add-ons; this year, in response, most of the activities (music and dance concerts, for example) will occur within a mile or two of the Olympic Stadium, and visitors can buy packages including tickets for both athletic and cultural events.



Government

July 1, clothing imports from Southeast Asia are likely to drop after today, when new U.S. rules for determining a garment's country of origin for quota purposes go into effect. For the past 12 years the country of origin has been considered to be that in which the fabric is cut. It will now be considered to be that in which the garment is assembled—a change that will especially affect imports from Hong Kong, Taiwan, and other countries that send cut fabric to China, where labor is less expensive, for assembly. (China's quota is usually filled.) Domestic apparel manufacturers may benefit (although consumers may see higher prices); also, assembly may increase in Latin American and Caribbean countries, many of which have inexpensive labor and high or nonexistent quotas.

Food

July 1, after today beef, pork, and frozen foods exported to South Korea will carry expiration dates set by American manufacturers rather than by the South Korean authorities, whose protectionist-motivated conservatism in this matter has long made it impossible for some products to clear customs before "expiring." The change is the result of a settlement mediated by the World Trade Organization last year, after Korean officials confiscated a shipment of American sausages. Beef and pork sales to South Korea—already the third-largest overseas market for U.S. beef—are expected to jump by hundreds of millions of dollars a year. Also this month thousands of tons of surplus onions from the early summer harvest will be fed to sheep. Ranchers have until now feared "onion poisoning," which can cause anemia and death. A recent USDA study, however, indicates that mild onions—which are far cheaper than grain—can safely make up as much as half of a sheep's diet.

Health & Safety

If past trends hold, nearly 10,000 people will be treated in emergency rooms this month for fireworks-related injuries—80 percent of the year's total. However, several efforts in progress could cut the number in coming years. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission is in the midst of the first comprehensive review of

fireworks safety in more than 20 years. Last spring it mandated new tests for multiple-tube mine and shell fireworks, which can tip over and fire horizontally, and which caused the two fireworks-related deaths of the past five years. It is reviewing standards for bottle rockets, which account for more than half of all eye injuries from fireworks. Two years ago the American Fireworks Standards Lab began a quality-improvement and testing program in China, which supplies 90 percent of the fireworks used in the United States. And representatives of more than a dozen nations have begun drafting an international standard for fireworks.



The Skies

July 4, Jupiter reaches opposition: it is on the opposite side of Earth from the Sun. It lies overhead at midnight tonight, and will be in the sky all night long during most of the month, near the teapot-shaped constellation Sagittarius. 7, the waning Moon passes close to Saturn. 30, Full Moon, also known this month as the Thunder, Hay, or Giant Cactus Moon. This event falls a few hours after perigee (the time of the month when the Moon is closest to Earth), and the combination is expected to produce the highest and lowest tides of the year.

Environment

July 1, some Californians may find buying an electric vehicle more attractive financially after today, when state funds become available for discounts of \$5,000 on EVs costing less than \$32,000 in the southern portion of the state. The discounts are part of a \$25 million two-year program designed to promote alternative-fuel



vehicles in California, whose Air Resources Board has mandated that by 2003, ten percent of the passenger vehicles sold in the state must have zero emissions. In addition, California recently approved \$1.6 million for the development of EV-charging stations in the Los Angeles area. Massachusetts, New York, and Vermont have also set goals for zero-emission vehicles, and Arizona will offer \$2,000 tax credits to those buying EVs, along with license plates that will allow alternative-fuel vehicles to use high-occupancy-vehicle lanes. EVs are a federal priority as well: the Department of Energy is paying roughly half of the EV-development costs incurred by Chrysler, Ford, and General Motors.

50 Years Ago

Sir Richard Livingstone, writing in the July, 1946, issue of *The Atlantic Monthly*: "Any attempt to train character is dangerous and must be undertaken with full perception of its danger. Many notes must be harmonized if the full music of the human instrument is to sound: gentleness and courage, boldness and prudence, inquisitiveness and reverence, tolerance and firmness, confidence and humility, stability and freedom. It is a difficult and risky attempt to make a man, and it is tempting to turn aside from the task. But we have only to look round to see the disastrous results of declining it, as, for the most part, we have hitherto done."



THE KING

THE PEOPLE

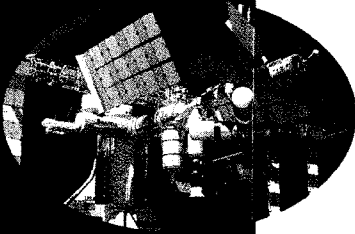
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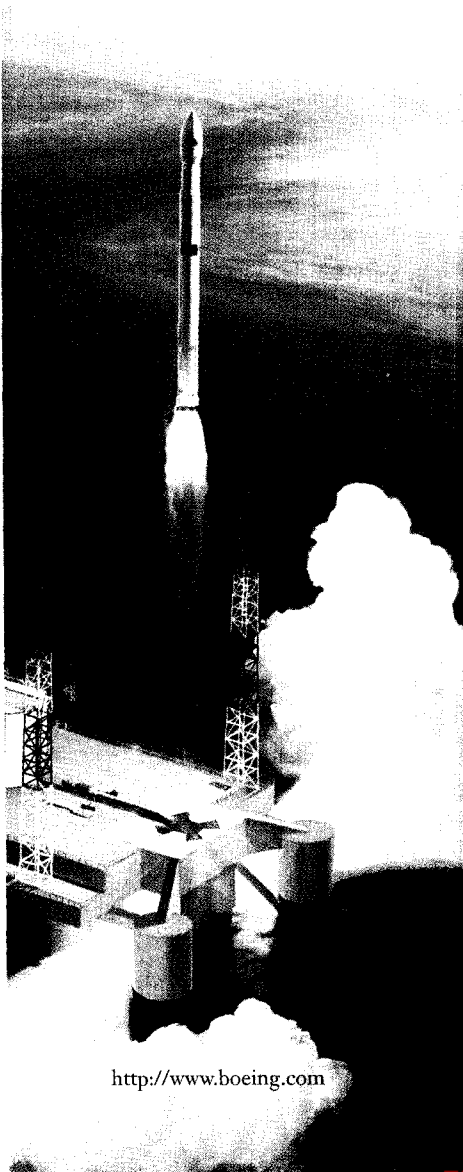
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Welcome to Our Tomb

Visitors to Ulysses S. Grant's final resting place have an opportunity to preserve their reactions for posterity. They don't need any prodding

I HAVE the rare good fortune to live within walking distance of a bona fide national monument. Grant's Tomb is just a mile and a half from my apartment, and I visit it whenever I have the time—which, since I am a writer, is too often. I tell myself that making the trek is good for my body, hiking uphill on Riverside Drive, taking in the relatively clean air along with some of the most beautiful vistas in Manhattan. But in truth I do it for less corporeal reasons. I find it comforting, even uplifting, to hang around a place so greatly revered that the federal government pays its bills and even posts rangers to take care of it. And it's gratifying to know that I live so close to something that draws tourists from around the world. Sure, I

by Richard Rubin

fact, that none of the rangers can remember when it wasn't.

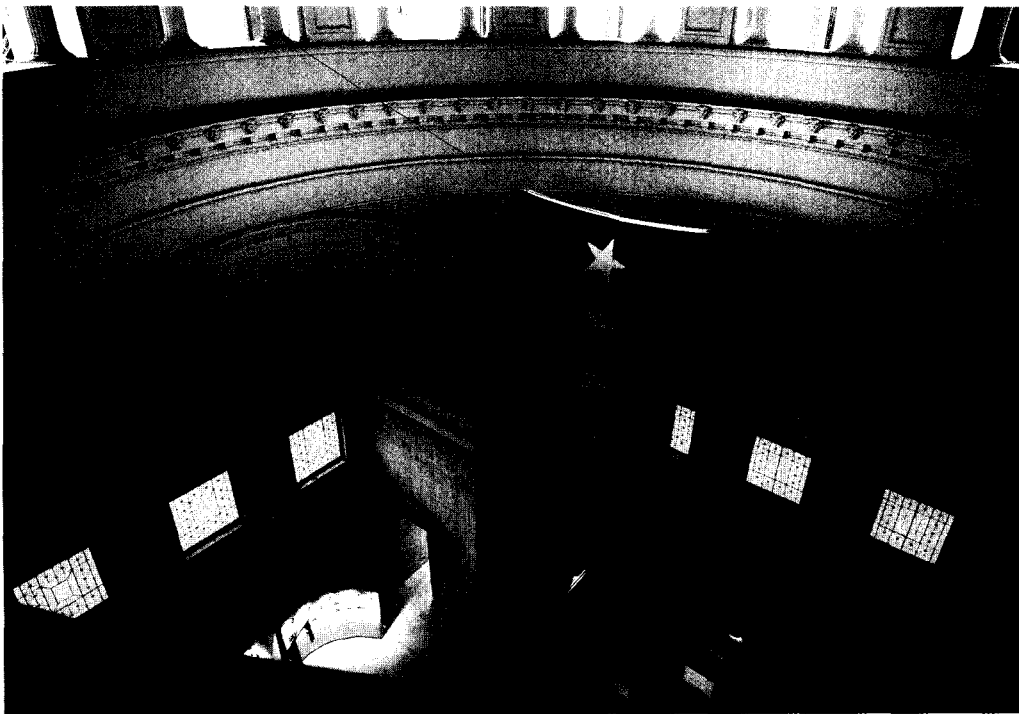
Of course, it's not the kind of thing you tend to notice immediately in a classical mausoleum with two eight-and-a-half-ton sarcophagi of Wisconsin red granite, five scowling bronze busts, and a pair of seventeen-foot-high wood-and-bronze doors. And there are so many other things to capture your attention: The great mural on the rotunda of Lee surrendering to Grant at Appomattox. The displays about Grant's life, about the building of the monument, and about the local African-American community. The tiny gift shop, with its Civil War-related biographies and coloring books and replica Confederate currency. The desk, where the rangers give out brochures and

bus schedules and subway maps. The huge electric fan that pushes the marble-cooled air around rather nicely in the summertime. I even spotted the brown blotches on the ceiling, remnants of water damage from the winter of 1993–1994, when a new snowstorm seemed to hit the city every Wednesday. But somehow I had long managed to overlook what has become my favorite Grant's Tomb exhibit, sitting alone atop a low brass bookstand near the door.

It's a big, old-fashioned guest register—the kind you might see at a country inn or a wedding—with

columns for name, date, place of origin, and comments. The accompanying pen isn't chained to anything, so it disappears from time to time, but the rangers keep replacing it.

That's a good thing, too. I'd hate to think what would happen if the Parks Department ever gave up on the guest register. At the very least, some local denizens would lose a place to



suppose I could say the same thing if I lived a few blocks from the Empire State Building or Rockefeller Center. But Grant's Tomb is far from the glitz of midtown, and besides, it has something those places don't. Something that's new and different every time I see it. Something I didn't even notice until recently, although it's been there for a long time—so long, in

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record thoughts, ideas, or merely the fact that they are still alive. My favorite is Bill, a semi-retired security guard who uses the register to keep track of his progress as a runner. Every day Bill, who has survived both a Bronx orphanage and the Korean War, jogs the two and a half miles up from Seventy-second Street. On his way he'll often pass me, less than half his age, and offer encouragement. "Look at me," he'll say, puffing and trotting backward to face me. "Sixty-five years old! I've lost thirty pounds! Someday we'll run together!" The "someday," of course, is when *I* get into shape. Anyway, whenever Bill makes particularly good time, or just when he feels like it, he takes government pen in hand and records his feat for the ages. U. S. Grant's guest book is his Luxor Obelisk. "Bill T." he'll inscribe, with proud flourishes. "New York, NY. 24:40:89. 4th best time. 65 years old." Had Bill been sixty-five in 1862, I am certain he would have stormed Fort Donelson with "Unconditional Surrender" Grant. Maybe even ahead of him.

Unlike Bill, most people who visit Grant's Tomb do so only once, and most of them confine their comments to two not terribly creative words. "Very nice" is a frequent entry. So are "Good tour," "Enjoyed it," and "Love U.S." (I'm never sure whether that last one refers to the general or his country.) In summertime "Get A.C." and its more polite cousin, "A.C., please!" show up several times a page. "Get bathrooms!" is a year-round favorite. "We see that a lot," a ranger told me recently. "People are always horrified when they find out there aren't any public bathrooms in here. But think about it: This is a cemetery. Do you have bathrooms in a cemetery?"

Occasionally people wax a little more contemplative. Once in a while, for example, someone will offer an interpretation of "Let Us Have Peace," a famous post-war motto of Grant's, which is inscribed over the tomb's entrance. "No more wars!" "Peace to all," "Someday, let us all know peace," and "Peace, please!" all pay homage to the general's pacifistic inclinations. I'm not so sure about "Let there be peace and balance the budget" and "No Jesus, no peace—Know Jesus, know peace," but at least they were trying.

So, I suppose, was the guy who scribbled "Free beer! The general would agree!" I imagine he's someone whose presence at a party inspires everyone else to wonder who invited him and why; still, he *did* evidence some knowledge of history. I try to find something redeeming in everyone, but occasionally there's just no way. One guy from Greenwich, Connecticut, used his "suggestions" space to demand, "Abolish funding for public TV." A woman from Wermelskirchen, Germany, wrote, "Is it so important still to honor this person? Let's look to the future!" Thank goodness for the fellow from Knokke, Belgium, who wrote on the very next

line, "It might scare you! Let us look to the past and *learn* for the future"—displaying, I believe, remarkable restraint.

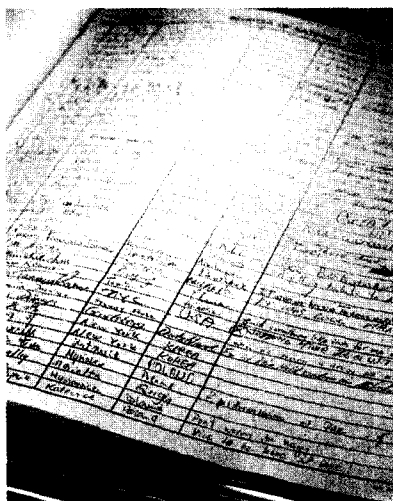
"What are the international implications?" a local man wrote one day. As if to answer him, a tourist from Taipei wrote, "The floor is not shining!" (thus demonstrating what is meant by the expression "Taipei personality"). "Diversity is liberty and tolerance," wrote someone from Barcelona; I don't know exactly what that means, but I'm sure it's a noble sentiment, one that undoubtedly became popular in Spain sometime after the Inquisition. Its author certainly showed more thought than did the family from Windsor, Connecticut, who wrote, "Open the coffins!" three times. "We get that one a lot too," a ranger told me with a sigh. "There are some sick people out there."

The ranger wasn't laughing. Gradually I stopped laughing too. The whole thing was starting to irritate me. "I love Robbie W.!" "It's my birthday!" "My boyfriend did the snow angel out front." "Hey ho let's go." "Let's go Rangers!!" "Oh Baby, Oh Baby, Oh Baby!" One day a woman who identified herself as a native of Havana wrote, "Very nice for a dead guy."

Ultimately I was saved from terminal curmudgeonliness by one of the tallest, darkest people I have ever seen. It was a muggy August day; I was sprawled on the tomb's front steps when I saw him walk inside. Later, when I got up and went in myself, to cool off, I spotted him at the book, bent over the podium and tapping the pen against his wrist, deep in thought. Then he wrote something, replaced the pen gingerly, and walked out. I stared at the register for a few seconds, uncertain whether I wanted to know or not. Finally I walked over and looked at the bottom line. The man was from Lagos, Nigeria. He had written, "I join the U.S. people in saluting this great hero."

That was it. Nothing witty or clever or self-serving or self-referential. Just ten words indicating that he appreciated Ulysses S. Grant and his monument, that "the international implications" were plain and obvious, that the money the government shells out to keep the place open and running is money well spent.

Fortunately, he's not alone. A guy from Champaign, Illinois, wrote, "Best things my taxes ever paid for, these parks." A woman from Berlin wrote, "A great tomb after a great life." A man from Nice wrote, "A most impressive display of national memory." A couple from Manhattan wrote, "Simple, yet beautiful and elegant. They don't build monuments like this anymore. Too bad." A woman from Buenos Aires wrote, "It's nice to see you give such an importance to your traditions and the people who built your nation." Some visitors from Manchester, England, wrote, "Impressive and a credit to the American people to show their gratitude in such a way." A man from Beijing wrote, "Freedom is great." ☼





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Private companies will soon launch satellites powerful enough to spot environmental hazards—or a car in your driveway. Should we worry about snooping from space?

FOR more than thirty years spy satellites launched by the United States have been gathering a “virtual time-machine record of the earth,” as Vice President Al Gore has described it. The public has paid close to \$100 billion for that record. But national-security and personal-privacy concerns

by Mary Graham

have blocked the use of the world’s most powerful sensors to make current information about natural resources, environmental hazards, and private property in the United States available to environmental scientists, government agencies, and businesses. Because the Central Intelligence Agency is barred by

federal law from spying on Americans, it shares current environmental information about the United States only in rare instances—for example, in response to natural disasters.

Now, though, spy-satellite technology that has been used for a single purpose—espionage—with extraordinary government controls can suddenly be used for any purpose with few controls. In 1994, concerned about the post-Cold War health of the U.S. aerospace industry and fearful that foreign competition might challenge U.S. leadership in satellite technology, the Clinton Administration decided that private companies could launch satellites with high-resolution sensors previously available only to the intelligence community, and could provide information to anyone willing to pay for it. As government officials take cautious steps to share information gathered by military satellites, four U.S. companies are racing to launch satellites of their own equipped with similar technology. The first launch is scheduled for later this summer.

At a recent conference in Washington, D.C., Mark Brender, ABC’s Pentagon producer, predicted that precise pictures from space will revolutionize television news, both by freeing reporters from relying on government-provided information during international crises and by freeing viewers from relying solely on what reporters tell them. David Bohrmann, an executive producer at NBC, demonstrated how networks could use satellite pictures to simulate flyovers of troop encampments in Bosnia. At his command a technician in New York using prerecorded images zoomed in on villages, scanned rivers, and hovered over military bases, producing a moving picture that resembled a helicopter ride around the countryside.

WHAT is really at stake is the ground rules for the next phase of mapping the earth. By next year three of the four companies plan to produce images of one-meter resolution—100 times as precise as those of current civilian satellites. The ability to see hazy outlines of large buildings will be replaced with the ability to see the clear shapes of small



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cars. The ability to observe the same farm or city block every sixteen days will be replaced with the ability to observe the same point every two or three days; three to six images a day of most places in the United States are promised within four years.

Fundamental issues are being decided now. When should the government be allowed to censor images to protect national security? Should fears of military snooping from space be replaced with fears of snooping by corporations or domestic agencies? Will access to satellites' most detailed pictures pass from a small cadre of military clients with top-secret clearance to a small cadre of corporate clients with the means to pay for them?

Since commercial use of this technology is new, no one has a ready framework for resolving questions about national security, the protection of privacy, and public access to information. Time-tested principles that allow the government to block information in emergencies, keep homes and their surroundings free from intrusion, and treat geographic information as a national resource can provide guidance—if they are heeded. The breadth of the government's power to censor images may be decided this fall, when the Commerce Department is expected to issue final policies setting the conditions for commercial licenses to operate satellites. Privacy questions may be decided in an international context: strict privacy rules adopted by the European Union last July require consent for the use of information that identifies an individual. They may keep companies in the United States from selling images abroad unless similar rules are approved in this country. Access questions—whether images can be copied and distributed to the public, for example—will probably be negotiated between satellite companies and their customers, including government agencies.

NO longer simply the source of spectacular views of the earth, satellite images have a new capacity to influence what people do and how they think. Using sophisticated software and powerful, inexpensive computers, businesses, government agencies, citizens' groups, and individuals can now produce layered

maps (called Geographic Information Systems, or GIS) that combine new environmental findings with information already available to the public, such as property ownership and census data. New satellites will make such maps more useful by providing high-resolution images with digital precision and offering predictable repeat visits. Neither aerial photography nor current civilian satellites like Landsat or the French SPOT can produce this combination.

The investigative powers of satellites derive not just from photography but from sensors measuring visible and invisible wavelengths of the sun's energy. These can reveal more about an object's character than can be discovered standing next to it: each species of plant, type of soil, and kind of rock or building material, for example, uniquely reflects and absorbs wavelengths. Experts add a few caveats: measures of reliability are critical; interpretation is complicated; and much of this science is still in its infancy. And like all maps, these reflect the quality of underlying information.

Information from sensors can give early warning of environmental hazards. Kass Green, the president of Pacific Meridian Resources, a mapping firm, expects that new images will help minimize the damage done by wildfires like those that sweep through urban areas such as Los Angeles and Oakland, California. For the first time, she says, it will be possible to easily distinguish asphalt, wood-shake, and synthetic-shake roofs and to assess from week to week the dryness of vegetation around homes. Planning firebreaks and other preventive measures depends on accurately predicting a fire's path.

Satellite maps can help to settle political controversies—or create them. When, for example, environmental groups and the Bush Administration clashed over how much old-growth forest in the Pacific Northwest should be protected as habitat for the spotted owl, competing layered maps produced by the Wilderness Society and the federal Forest Service provided a basis for negotiation, by clarifying different ways of defining old growth. New maps of Latin America that were completed last fall by the World Wildlife Fund have led to a debate about how to use limited conservation funds: the maps make

clear that tropical dry forests and grasslands are as important to biodiversity as rain forests, and are more severely threatened.

Satellite images can make things harder to hide. The Environmental Protection Agency has used such images to help identify hazardous-waste sites and sources of water pollution. European farmers, who receive crop subsidies of \$50 billion a year, have new reasons to submit accurate information: their planting patterns are monitored from space by the European Commission. When farm boundaries are layered over images of the countryside, infrared color codes reveal whether a field is growing barley, wheat, corn, or something else.

OF course, newly explicit images can also be used to make mischief. Foreign intelligence agencies are expected to be among the largest buyers of high-resolution images. "International security issues are serious," says Ray Williamson, a senior research scientist at the George Washington University Space Policy Institute. "Iraq would be interested in information about Saudi Arabia. Iran would like to see data about Israel. India and Pakistan would like to have information about each other. If you were concerned about troop buildup on your border, you could put in a standing order for the satellite to take a picture every time it passed over." During international conflicts this greater access could lessen the information advantage the United States has over other countries.

Some experts argue that expanded access could be beneficial. Neighboring countries might be less quick to threaten each other when troop movements were visible to all. When U.S. troops are involved in international conflicts, though, the U.S. government has a strong interest in controlling the flow of information. "One reason we were able to best the Iraqis," Williamson says, "was that we had very good information about them and they didn't know what we were doing."

To minimize security risks, the U.S. government is working to keep "shutter control"—broad latitude to turn off sensors when images might compromise "national security, international obligations and/or foreign policies." Representatives of television networks and other

news media argue that the government's authority to stop the use of satellite images should be no broader than its authority to stop the publication or airing of other sensitive information, and that exercising it should require the same judicial process.

Whatever the outcome of that debate, growing international competition means that customers who want high-resolution images will probably be able to buy them. The CIA has been cautious about declassifying spy-satellite pictures: so far only archives from 1960 to 1972 have been released to the public, and the results of a joint U.S.-Russian effort to study environmentally important sites around the world using spy satellites will be kept secret for the foreseeable future. But Russia is already selling some current two-meter images from military satellites, and France, Israel, and Japan plan to market high-resolution imagery.

WHERE to draw the line between personal privacy and the public and commercial need for information will become urgent when high-resolution surveillance is routine. For the first time, detailed pictures of every piece of private property in the United States will be routinely compiled and marketed. Commercial satellites cannot yet produce images of people, but they can show vehicles parked in driveways and structural changes to homes. They can provide images within a few hours and exact comparisons of the same property at precise intervals without giving clues about their presence—things that aerial photography cannot do.

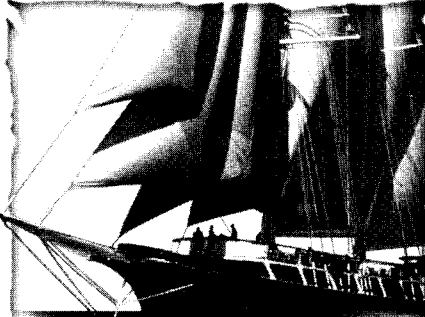
For the police, precise images mean a new investigative tool, says James Frelk, the vice-president of EarthWatch, the company that plans the first new satellite launch. Officers monitoring a suspected crack house, for example, will be able to see the pattern of vehicles arriving and leaving. "They can see the difference between a van, a truck, and a car," Frelk says, "and make a good guess about whether the same car was there yesterday." He expects local governments to be regular customers for other uses, such as updating tax assessments and spotting additions to homes and outbuildings that are in violation of building codes.

The Fourth Amendment to the Consti-

tution has traditionally been understood to protect homes and the areas immediately surrounding them from unreasonable government intrusion; laws of trespass have protected against snooping by businesses or individuals. In the days before electronic wizardry, that meant freedom from physical entry. When wiretapping and hidden microphones made intrusion possible without breaking down doors or climbing fences, the idea of privacy became more subjective. The Constitution was then taken to mean that areas where individuals have "a reasonable expectation of privacy," including homes and yards, must remain free of government intrusion—physical or electronic.

But in the past ten years judicial support for the use of aerial photography to spot marijuana crops in the war against drugs has left doubt about whether any outdoor space can be considered private. The last time the Supreme Court ruled on the question, in 1986, it upheld the legality of an aerial backyard search that produced pictures of a stand of marijuana plants, hidden from view on the ground by a ten-foot-high fence. In the war against drugs "one of the casualties has been the Fourth Amendment," says Yale Kamisar, a professor of constitutional law at the University of Michigan and a leading authority on privacy issues. Most constitutional scholars agree that increasingly sophisticated technology is no justification for lessening the protection of privacy in one's home and yard. Yet courts continue to uphold warrantless searches of yards by means of aerial surveillance, even though the searches would be illegal if the police jumped a fence. "We have much less privacy than we think," Kamisar says. "If the Fourth Amendment doesn't adapt to new technology, it's going to wither and die."

Corporate privacy, too, is shrinking. On the same day that it upheld the aerial search for marijuana plants, the Supreme Court ruled on a case in which inspectors from the Environmental Protection Agency sought entry without a warrant to the 2,000-acre Dow Chemical plant in Midland, Michigan, in order to check emissions from power plants and take photographs, and were denied it. The inspectors then rented a plane and took seventy-five color photos using an aerial mapping camera; the Court found that



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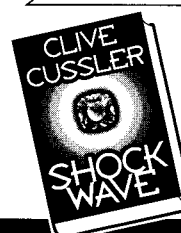
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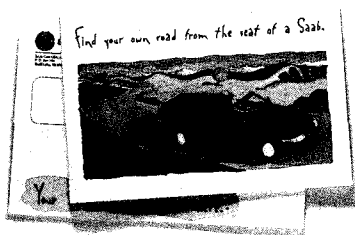
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inspection using aerial photography did not violate the Constitution.

Confusing matters further, the Court left clues that government satellite surveillance might be an invasion of privacy even when aerial photography is not. The majority said that "surveillance of private property by using highly sophisticated surveillance equipment not generally available to the public, such as satellite technology, might be constitutionally proscribed absent a warrant." In each of the two cases four dissenting justices thought that there should be more protection of privacy than the Court provided.

Other threats to privacy arise when scattered public information is combined with precise images of homes or farms. A new wing on a house, a trip to the Caribbean, and a few major purchases could together signal a change in lifestyle of interest to tax collectors, business partners, or ex-spouses. Farmers competing for high yields could profit from a week-by-week record of a neighbor's success in using irrigation, fertilizers, and pesticides. New satellites will make information accessible on personal computers within hours.

Congress and state legislatures have in some instances restricted the free flow of information among companies and between government agencies and companies. Self-restraint by businesses and government agencies, too, can go a long way toward avoiding consumers' worst nightmares. But advances in technology are running far ahead of efforts to limit their use. Any further privacy protection will have to be legislated. "Whenever privacy questions occur in the context of new technology, it takes a long time for the courts to respond," says Gilbert S. Merritt, the chief judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit, who wrote the appellate opinion upholding the EPA's aerial surveillance of the Dow Chemical plant. "The last issues arose with wiretapping. It's taken forty years to reach some kind of stability in that law."

MOST new information, of course, will not raise privacy questions. But on what terms will it be shared? Until now geographic data have been treated as a national resource. Only a few governments have been capable of

launching earth-observing satellites. The last generation of U.S. civilian satellites, the Landsat series, was financed by taxpayers, and most of its images are available to the public for the cost of duplicating the information. (Landsat images have been distributed commercially since 1985.) But the next group of earth-observing satellites is being financed and launched by private companies. Their images will be produced under contract, customized for clients, and made available at market prices. EarthWatch will retain the ownership of all its images, licensing their use by individual customers and restricting their reproduction, just as computer companies now limit the copying of software. Foreign governments, large corporations, and other paying clients will get exclusive rights to information they pay for—a big change. "Up to now, when we have acquired mapping information by contract, it has been in the public domain," says Gale TeSelle, who coordinates geographic data at the Department of Agriculture. "We give it away or we sell it as inexpensively as possible." TeSelle believes that by using such information to encourage farmers to fight erosion, for example, or to use a minimum of chemicals against pests, the government can "increase the conservation ethic."

None of these concerns should slow the next steps in mapping the earth. It is cause for celebration that we are entering a time of competitive, unpredictable exploration just when description of the seven continents seemed virtually complete. Amid budget pressures and privatization efforts, however, there is real danger that simple and familiar protections will be compromised. Whatever the public and commercial value of creating precise maps linking physical characteristics of residences with other publicly available information, the making of those maps should be limited by the traditional notion that a person's home and surrounding areas are private. And commercial satellite ventures should be limited by the idea that geographic information remains a national resource, to be shared at minimal cost. Dangers lie not in what satellite sensors can record but in how the political system allows that information to be used. The clearer the protections now, the greater the likely benefits later. ☛

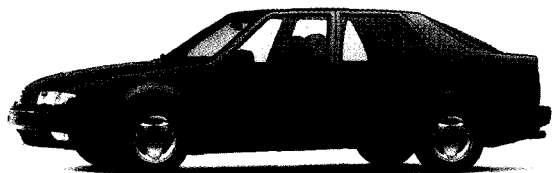
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Germania Irredenta

Renouncing a provision of the 1945 Potsdam Declaration, Germans are looking more than wistfully at lands they lost in the war—and suing to get them back. Do some things never change?

I CLEARLY remember a newsreel of the state memorial ceremony for Reinhard Heydrich, which I saw in late 1942, when I was a very young sergeant in the British army. (Germany exported movie news to Sweden and Switzerland, and some got to England.) Heydrich, the German governor of Bohemia and Moravia (now the Czech Republic), had been killed by two Czech resistance fighters that spring. The service was in a dark hall in Berlin, lit by torches; a heathenish, Valhalla-like effect had been achieved. In his oration Hitler screamed that if the Czechs would not

“co-exist peacefully” in the German Reich, they would at some future date be resettled in the Polar Circle. His audience shouted its approval. Earlier Hitler had picked the small town of Lidice, near the spot where the Czechs attacked Heydrich’s car, as the focal point for immediate vengeance. Its adults were killed, its children shipped to camps and German orphanages and given German names.

Heydrich had not only been the ruler of Bohemia and Moravia; he had also been given the task of organizing the extermination of the Jews of Europe. The

invitations to the Wannsee Conference of January 20, 1942, where the logistics of the gas chamber were worked out, had been sent out by him from Prague. “*Mit anschliessendem Frühstück*,” his letters said—“With breakfast to follow.”

Hitler’s Polar Circle plans have, fifty-four years later, attracted unexpected new interest. Several Sudeten Germans have sued in Czech courts for the restitution of lands and property that were appropriated after the Sudetens were expelled from what is now the Czech Republic, at the end of the Second World War. The government of Chancellor Helmut Kohl, which wants an apology from the Czechs for those expulsions, announced last year through its Foreign Minister, Klaus Kinkel, that approval of the expulsions as part of the 1945 Potsdam Declaration by the Big Three (the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Soviet Union) did not make them legal. Kinkel sided with the Sudeten Germans, who assert that the declaration is in conflict with the United Nations Charter. (He uses the more circumspect phrase “in conflict with international law.”)

A shiver must have gone through Germany’s neighbors at this argument, which questions the very foundation of

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their states. Last February the ambassadors of the United States, the United Kingdom, and Russia published a statement in Prague reaffirming the Potsdam Declaration. But a feeling persisted that, just maybe, we were going back to square one.

As far as I could see, the U.S. media gave very little attention to this. It made me decide to take a trip, early this year, to southern Germany.

THE Second World War really started with those Sudeten Germans. Some two to three million of them lived in “the Sudetenland,” as the Germans called a Czech region along the border. In 1938 Hitler declared that the Sudetenland was Germany’s last irredenta—the last foreign territory that really belonged to Germany—and that to get it was his “last demand” in Europe. All through the summer he fought a war of nerves against the West, raving about the perfidious Czechs and their “stage actor President,” Eduard Beneš, who were terrorizing Germans, beating German women and children who wore white stockings (the German “uniform”) and murdering Germans in isolated villages. The circus of provocation was orchestrated for him by the leader of the Sudeten Germans, the Nazi Konrad Henlein. The United States was looking away at that time; England and France caved in and forced the Czechs to cede the Sudetenland. This was “Munich”—the

slept in the government Hradčany Castle under the swastika flag. “I saw our enemies at Munich,” he told his followers later. “They are little worms.”

When one rethinks this story and the terror of the six-year German occupation that followed, in which some 350,000 Czechs lost their lives, one cannot be surprised that after the German surrender in 1945 there were numerous acts of local vengeance in which Sudeten Germans were killed. The bulk of those who remained were deported by the Czech government with a minimum of consideration—not to the Polar Circle, though, but back to their fatherland. These Germans and their descendants now want their lands and houses back. Meanwhile, the Czech survivors of the German concentration camps, some 17,000, still have not received any compensation from Bonn.

I learned on my visit that there is a specifically political angle to this: the Sudeten Germans have a pressure group within Germany, the Sudetendeutsche Landsmannschaft, with political clout that the millions of German deportees from Poland never had. Bavaria, where most of them live, is one of the sixteen *Länder* (states) in reunited Germany; it has a lot of autonomous power. A 1954 act of its government established the Sudeten Germans as one of the four population groups that make up Bavaria (with the Swabians, the Franconians, and the Old Bavarians) and guarantees them *Schirmherrschaft*—“high protection” or “guardianship.” This gives the Sudetens a direct channel to the Bavarian government and through that to Bonn. Bonn’s conservatives are particularly nervous right now about being outflanked on the right.

What is happening could be nothing more than a war of words. (Indeed, in a May speech Kinkel spoke of compensation for the Czech “victims of Nazi injustice.”) It points, though, to a basic dilemma: either united Germany is an established country like any other, with all the egotism and arrogance of a major power, or it is still in a kind of quarantine. Europe’s politicians and businesspeople have long accepted the first alternative, although I was often told that Kohl himself promotes a united Europe so fervently because he does not trust his country to be left on its own. He has called Germany’s integration into Eu-

rope “a matter of life or death” for the twenty-first century.

One of the people who stressed this point of view to me was an editor of the *Stuttgarter Zeitung*, a serious and liberal south-German newspaper. The day we first met he wrote in his paper, “He who tries to demand certain rights based on the past prepares a European catastrophe.” Those words were directed at the Sudeten Germans in Bavaria. Thoughtful as they sound, they gave me the feeling that even he still didn’t “get it.”

It’s not a matter of the Sudetens’ claiming their property on the basis of past records. It is a matter of the past’s not being a source of *any* kind of German rights. If Germany had been a victor, even for a limited time, whole nations and many old and famous cities would have been wiped off the earth. The best that reunited Germany can ask for, it seems to me, is a clean slate. By no stretch of emotion or law should it expect a court to study the deportation of the Sudetens or any other such actions outside their contexts.

When my discussion with the editor turned to united Germany’s border with Poland, he called it a *Wohlstandsgrenze*—a line between poor and well-off people. He was, perhaps unconsciously, downgrading a national border to an affair of economic zoning. After 1945, West German maps and atlases continued to show the 1937 borders. East Germany was usually called “Middle Germany.” The Potsdam demarcations, the maps indicated, were but “temporary.” Indeed they were—but no one in the West predicted that they would change again to Germany’s advantage. Among the many who played along with this negation of postwar political reality was the American oil company Esso, as Exxon was then called; when one had to drive through a checkpoint, the East German guards confiscated Esso road maps and tore them up with great gusto. A conference of West German education ministers ruled that in schoolbooks “the loss of German land in the East is to be established as a loss to the entire civilized world.”

When I traveled this spring from Paris to Frankfurt on an evening train, I saw to my horror that the railroad map in the corridor showed no border at all between Germany and Poland beyond a two-inch-long dotted line west of

After 1945 maps continued to show the 1937 borders. East Germany was called “Middle Germany.”

shameful surrender led by the English Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain, in the fall of 1938. Czechoslovakia lost its fortified border with Germany and its important armaments factories, and some six months later the rest of the country was taken by the Germans without a shot. Hitler came to Prague and

Szczecin. With the first daylight I discovered that there was indeed a border marked, so thin as to be almost invisible against the blue of the Oder River, which it followed. I am sure that German railroad officials would say this was done unthinkingly. The towns east of the border were shown with both their Polish and old German names.

I had a few years before traveled by train from Berlin to Warsaw in a compartment full of what are called here *Heimwehtouristen*—"homesickness tourists." At each stop they stood at the window and discussed what this or that town was "really" called. A German atlas from the time between the two world wars shows Strasbourg as a German town and omits the Polish corridor. One might say that German cartography is always one war behind.

NOTHING in this is so very surprising. I cannot think of a single historical example of a country's voluntarily giving up on its irredenta. That Germany is now as strong as it was in 1914, and Russia perhaps as weak as it was in 1914, does not make it any likelier that Germany will be the exception. The best chance for lasting peace would be if Germany under the Nazis was a historically unique situation.

A German historian, Fritz Fischer, in 1961 published a book about Germany's policies during the First World War. *Griff nach der Weltmacht*. The title translates as *Grab for World Power*, although "Griff" has a slightly less negative color than "grab." An abridged version was published by the New York publisher W. W. Norton under the calm title *Germany's Aims in the First World War*. In the book Fischer showed how the Kaiser's serious, polite, formalistic Germany was in its policies painfully close to Nazi Germany in the next war. Naturally, the book caused an outcry in West Germany, but its scholarship and the mass of documentation it presented left little room for factual criticism.

Fischer documented that Germany's war aim, almost until the bitter end, was the creation of a German Mitteleuropa that would include Belgium, Holland, Scandinavia, and, of course, Poland. In 1918 the Ukraine was added. (Analogous to it would be Mittelafrica, a German colony stretching across Africa

from ocean to ocean.) Wartime German state documents said nonetheless that Germany was fighting for the "liberty of the continent of Europe and its peoples"; France, weakened "forever" by a German demand for 40 billion gold francs in reparations, would be forced to join the war against England.

A report to the Imperial Chancellery showed a map of the frontier strip isolating a rump Poland (perhaps to be ceded to Austria-Hungary), which was to be settled by Germans from the "Old Reich"—after being "cleared" by deporting part of its Polish population and all its Jews. A memorandum drawn up at the instruction of Chancellor Bethmann Hollweg declared, "The German people, the greatest colonising people of the world, . . . must be given wider frontiers within which it can live a full life." If the word *Lebensraum* isn't there yet, the concept certainly is.

I realize that it is not politically correct to generalize about an entire nation; still, centuries of a common history may put a stamp on a society which makes it hard for other societies to understand. I hope I am not venturing into an area of pseudoscience when I suggest that German aggressiveness was based not only on an overconfidence that the country presumably no longer feels about itself but also, paradoxically, on a lack of confidence it *does* feel. What is one to make otherwise of a report by Gustav Krupp, the arms manufacturer, written for the government in the fall of 1914? (The great industrialists of Germany played a large role in defining war policies.) Krupp wrote that German domination should continue in Belgium and extend to the north coast of France. He explained,

Here we should be lying at the very marrow of England's world power, a position—perhaps the only one—which could bring us England's *lasting friendship* [*italics mine*]. For only if we are able to hurt England badly at any moment will she really leave us unmolested, perhaps even become our 'friend', in so far as England is capable of friendship at all.

The truth about nations is endlessly complicated, and political predictions based on generalization may go awry: the recent past provides plenty of examples. I find reason for some optimism in this. An experience I had toward the end of my

visit may illustrate what I mean. One of my conversations about the German irredenta was with an academician whose real feelings about the matter didn't become quite clear to me. He seemed to feel that Germany's reunification had indeed created a "new legal context." He then started talking about himself.

*I was often told that
Kohl promotes a united
Europe because he does
not trust his country to
be left on its own.*

This man would have been born in Königsberg, in East Prussia, he told me, if his parents had not fled to the west from the approaching battles, in the winter of 1944–1945. He was born in West Germany just after the war ended.

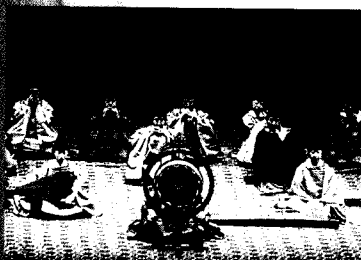
Königsberg is now Kaliningrad, a town in Russia. As a naval base on the Baltic Sea, it was for many years closed to foreigners—but no longer. Two years ago the academician traveled there. He wandered through what he still considered to be his home town, accompanied by a Russian student guide who spoke German. Coming to the street where his parents had lived, he found that their house was still standing. He looked at it for a while and then hastened on. But his guide suggested that they go back and ring the bell and ask for a look inside. The man balked at first, but then his curiosity got the better of him and he agreed.

They were asked in. Three families now lived in the house. When the man explained the reason for his visit, the Russians made him sit down and brought out tea and cakes, and eventually (of course) vodka. They were clearly poor people, but they searched high and low for something to give him as a present. If he warned them in advance, they told him, the next time they would receive him in style.

The academician paused here, lost in thought. Then, to my astonishment, he ended, "And I now think that that was the best day in my entire life." ☼

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Buffed and Polished

Health spas are more numerous and diverse than ever before. Our correspondent learns how to choose wisely

THE health-spa industry continues to boom. Two decades ago there were about twenty "destination" spas in the United States—the traditional self-contained, full-service resorts that "spa" implies. (The word is borrowed from the name of a Belgian resort town.) Now there are twice as many, and this growth has been accompanied by an explosion of both high- and low-end offshoots. There are now more than 350 upscale hotel spas, club spas, and day spas in the country. At fancy resort hotels, in-house spa complexes that offer athletic facilities, exercise classes, and personal services such as massage

and facials have become a must: convention bookers and well-to-do family vacationers expect them. At the other end of the spectrum the beauty salon or health club in the local shopping mall is likely to offer a "mini day spa," including facials, massages, and a gourmet lunch. These are countless. And imaginative variations on the destination spa are springing up as well—specialty spas that build the experience around, say, mountain hikes, rafting, or yoga.

Kim Marshall, a spokesperson for the International Spa & Fitness Association, a trade organization, explains that aging, affluent Baby Boomers, who "won't take

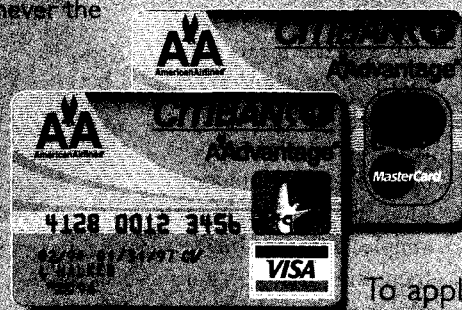
their own health sitting down," are at the heart of this market. The great majority of today's spa customers are women, some of whom are strictly devoted to their spa ritual. For example, Grace Mirabella, as the editor of *Vogue* and then of *Mirabella*, had her annual spa visit written into her contract. The spa industry views men as a tremendous potential market. Ten years ago they made up eight percent of spa customers. Their share has now risen to about 25 percent, and the industry is hopeful that still more men can be persuaded that spas are not "fat farms for the wealthy," as Marshall puts it, but a smart way to keep stress low, muscle tone high, and creative energy on edge.

I've recently spent time, courtesy of the owners, at four premier health spas: the Golden Door, near San Diego; Rancho La Puerta, just across the border in Tecate, Mexico; and the two Canyon Ranch spas, in Tucson, Arizona, and in the Berkshires, in Massachusetts. Besides returning home "buffed and polished," as my family described me, I learned some things that may help you explore the possibility of your own spa vacation.

by Deborah Fallows

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THERE was a sameness to the patterns of daily life at these health spas, involving hard physical exercise, mental rest, spiritual renewal, and healthful eating. The Golden Door excels at fine-tuning a personal daily plan for each guest. At the initial interview I had indicated that I was interested in tough exercise, and my schedule looked like this: Mornings began at dawn with a brisk hike through secluded hills. Breakfast appeared in my cottage while I showered and changed. By eight o'clock I was at my favorite class, an hour of tai chi. The hard work and play continued throughout the day: hour-long classes of floor aerobics or circuit training or weight workouts or swimming, alternating with luxurious choices from the "beauty menu," such as an aromatherapy face-and-neck treatment and a Moortherapy body treatment (it's mud from Austria). At the end of each afternoon, after a few minutes in the eucalyptus steam room, I fell onto

GOLDEN DOOR FITNESS RESORT



A deck over the koi pond at the Golden Door

the table for my deep massage, which was accompanied by New Age music and cooing doves. Any evening energy—and there wasn't much—was spent on a movie or a lecture. The day was capped off with another, brief massage before bed.

Entering the Golden Door was as good for my spirit as for my body; I felt like Jane Wyatt entering Shangri-la in the 1937 film *Lost Horizon*. There was an aura of tranquillity and serenity and isolation from the world's turmoil. With only thirty-nine guests each week, the 120-member staff could anticipate our every need (fresh exercise clothes delivered daily) and indulge our every whim (would you like your massage in the bathhouse, or perhaps in your room, or even outdoors?).

The Golden Door is where practice

has made perfect. The site of the practice is its older-sister spa, Rancho La Puerta, in Mexico. "The Ranch" opened in 1940 as a humble cooperative health camp. In the start-up years guests contributed \$17.50 a week and their own labor chopping firewood and tending goats, crops, and the camp vineyard in exchange for the opportunity to hike in the mountains and swim in the river, eat

healthful vegetarian meals, and—the main draw—listen to daily lectures by the camp's founder, Edmond Szekely. Szekely was a Hungarian scholar and philosopher who preached the value of a simple, caring, healthy life based on principles he had extracted from the study of the Dead Sea colony's ancient Essene sect.

By now, of course, much has changed. Edmond Szekely is dead. Deborah Szekely, who was there in the beginning as his seventeen-year-old child bride, and the couple's children carry on the spirit, but they have moved Rancho La Puerta into the 1990s, in which it is a unique, transcending, offbeat experience. Normally tough customers such as New York literary agents and Wash-

ington lawyers use the word "magical" to describe it. The meals remain vegetarian, almost all still straight from the ranch's gardens. The accommodations are comfortable but simple, with handmade signs requesting that you conserve water. A philosophy of the interdependence of mind, body, and spirit sets the tone for many activities: guests commonly rise before dawn to practice yoga by firelight in a gym with a beamed ceiling. At sun-



GOLDEN DOOR FITNESS RESORT

The central dining hall at Rancho La Puerta

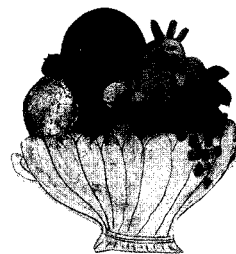
set another gym fills for the popular Inner Journey class, in which guests explore private problems or thoughts or just drift along to the rhythms of chants and temple bells.

If the Golden Door and Rancho La Puerta are, respectively, the Rolls-Royce and the Hummer of the spa world, then Canyon Ranch in Tucson and its sister spa in the Berkshires are the sleek and polished Jaguars. In 1978 Mel

Zuckerman, who was then an overweight, overwrought real-estate developer, spent four weeks at a California health spa, where he lost twenty-nine pounds and had what he calls a "transformative experience." Zuckerman saw "how empowered people were to be healthy," and this spurred him to set out with his wife, Enid, to realize their version of the spa dream.

Eighteen months later they opened Canyon Ranch in Tucson, which today is a shimmering seventy-acre spread—a community of good will, plenitude, and energy. There are nine gyms, eight tennis courts, assorted volleyball, racquetball, squash, and basketball courts, and four swimming pools, including one with a state-of-the-art underwater treadmill. A sun-never-sets tone drives the day: five different morning walks depart at 7:00 A.M., and thereafter guests may choose among forty exercise classes, guided hikes and bike rides in the Santa Catalina foothills, and evening programs from hobby classes to lectures to astrology sessions.

I spent a breathless day or two trying to do everything—a mistake made by many neophyte spa-goers—before I slowed down and made choices. I browsed the fifty-three-page guide to services, therapies, and treatments (including those offered at the impressive full-scale medical facility that sets Canyon Ranch apart from every



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other spa I know of). In Tucson or in the Berkshires I tried acupuncture, reflexology, biofeedback, a seaweed treatment, and a posture alignment, and I had a bone-density evaluation. Having approached some of these a bit skeptically, I was consistently impressed with the staff's professionalism and the first-rate service it provided. The whole experience was also a lot of fun.

Canyon Ranch in the Berkshires, the Zuckermans' second spa, which opened in 1989, was built around a restored turn-of-the-century thirty-five-room mansion in Lenox, Massachusetts—a town once considered the Newport of the hills for East Coast millionaires. This Canyon Ranch has adapted to the East Coast nicely as a more sedate, New England version of the original, with an elegant country-French formal dining room and a firelit high-ceilinged library. And it makes the most of the seasonal offerings of its neighborhood, sending guests to Tanglewood on summer evenings or cross-country or downhill skiing in the winter.

I LEARNED some valuable lessons from my spa stays. Most important, spa-goers must know what they're after. People generally go to health spas for some combination of these three reasons: to get in shape, to be pampered, to deal with a problem such as stress or overweight or grief. Since spas have different strengths and emphases, you'll feel happy or dissatisfied with your stay according to whether you choose a spa well suited to your needs.

The publication *The Spa Finder*, produced by the country's largest spa-specialty travel company, Spa-Finders (call

800-255-7727 or, in New York, 212-924-6800 to order a \$5.95 catalogue), or a good guidebook such as Fodor's *Healthy Escapes* helps you search by categorizing spas according to specialty, such as luxury pampering, preventive

medicine, sports conditioning, nutrition and diet, or spiritual awareness. Once you're in the right field, you can shorten your list according to location, cost, size, and so on.

You can also try reading between the lines to get a sense of atmosphere, although I've found that to be a lesser substitute for talking to friends or acquaintances who know a spa firsthand.

Other things to bear in mind:

Do you want a stay of just a few days, or can you spare a week? This choice matters particularly because some spas have prescribed schedules, whereas others let you create your own. It seemed to me that one key to the harmony of the Golden Door and Rancho La Puerta is that all the guests arrive together and depart together, and they can be paced through a full week—unwinding and mellowing—in unison.

At the Golden Door, I felt the world slipping away day by day. On Monday, I was my usual hyperorganized self, trotting from class to class toting schedule and gym bag. By Wednesday, very relaxed, I could barely keep track of my locker key. On Thursday it seemed a wholly appropriate question when, at the conclusion of a silk-mitted total-body scrub, the young attendant, who was holding up a fluffy, warmed towel, asked, "Shall I dry you?"

The sense of harmony is diminished when guests check in daily, bringing

their fresh tensions from the outside world. And it is nonexistent at spas within large hotels, where your fellow guests may be conventioners whooping it up at night after long days in meetings. They won't be in the same frame of mind as you are.

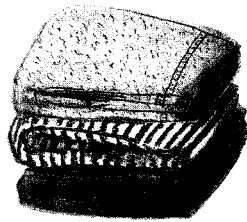
Since spa vacations aren't cheap, look closely at the packages and plans offered by spas that interest you. The Golden Door (800-424-0777) charges a hefty fee: \$4,375 for the week, or \$3,875 in summer. But this covers everything: daily massages, wraps in herb-soaked linens, body scrubs, facials, and more, which could raise your cost well above this fee if you were ordering a la carte elsewhere. In addition you're buying the pleasure of avoiding decisions and forgetting about money (do I want to spend another \$55 today for another massage?). At Rancho La Puerta (800-443-7565) fees range from \$1,485 to \$2,330 for the week, with beauty treatments and massages extra.

The Canyon Ranches (800-726-9900 for information on both) offer many options. In Tucson, for example, there are packages ranging from a four-night off-season stay (about \$1,300, plus an 18 percent service charge) to a ten-night high-season stay in luxury accommodations (\$5,740, plus service).

Each package includes a number of services, and more may be added—for example, an herbal wrap, the exotic Parisian body scrub, a complete physical, or even a night of sleep-apnea monitoring.

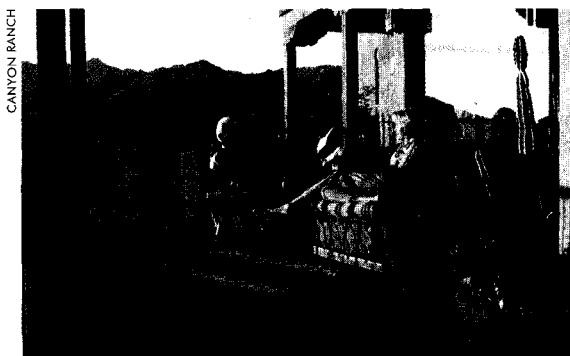
Spas have personalities, just as regions and neighborhoods do. Staff members at Canyon Ranch say that guests who have been to both their campuses tend to like one style or the other. For me, relaxation and renewal mean the hot climates of the dry Southwest or the humid tropics. Others prefer tall oaks to tumbleweed, and live by the change of seasons.

Similarly, the setting of the spa matters. Rancho La Puerta is so far from



RICHARD MANDELKORN

The library at Canyon Ranch in the Berkshires



A cottage at Tucson's Canyon Ranch

civilization that you are likely to be able to watch a meteor shower against the black sky from your terrace at 3:00 A.M., as I did. But, to be fair, if you enjoy this side of the spa's rusticity, you shouldn't object when the soap won't lather or your feet are cold on the tile floors.

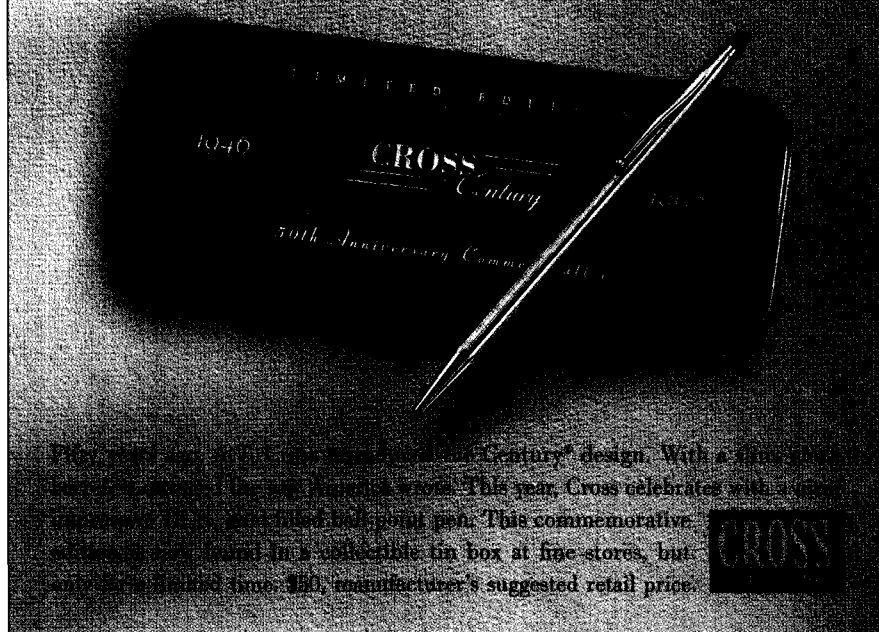
At Canyon Ranch in Tucson you'll see the light of the city's suburban sprawl, but you can also plug into the pulse of the nation with TVs, radios, and newspapers, and stock your room fridge with beer from a nearby shopping mall. The accommodations are luxurious; the cottage I stayed in was more comfortably equipped and appointed than the house where my entire family of four lived for a year in Yokohama.

Your fellow spa-goers will also affect your experience. Here those worried comments your children may have made should resonate with you: "Who will share my cabin at summer camp?" "Do you think I'll like my college roommate?" Of course, you don't need to share your accommodations, but you will share a spa experience with the other guests more intimately than you would share most other vacations. Meal-times tend to be social occasions; people get to know one another during hikes and walks; faces become familiar at exercise classes. You may not be able to do anything about it, but be prepared for it.

The Golden Door meets the gender gap among spa patrons head on: thirty-nine weeks of the year are for women only, five are for men, and the rest are co-ed. I didn't do a head count at Rancho La Puerta, but women predominated, and the men looked like they were having a great time. At Canyon Ranch in Tucson there were lots of couples. In the Berkshires it was a strongly feminine week. The few men in attendance seemed to be just following their wives around. Whether the balance of the sexes matters to you is worth thinking about.

Now, here's a lesson that spas try to teach: find something to "take home with you." They don't mean a T-shirt or a recipe for salsa. I've been surprised that many months later, long after the mellow vacation feelings have dissipated, I can recall something about my spa stays—the way the light looked behind a mountain, or how I felt doing tai chi—that will bring back a moment of magic I found. ♪

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Recipe for a Depression



URING the past decade the one thing Americans have known for sure about the federal budget deficit is that it is bad. Government spending soaked up money that industries could have been using to create new technologies and new jobs. No wonder incomes have grown so slowly, while the American economy as a whole has worn its iron collar of debt.

But what if the one thing we all know is wrong—or, more precisely, what if it is out of date? In the early 1980s, when budget deficits were soaring as a share of the national economy, politicians were slow to recognize the political and social distortions that a decade of heavy borrowing could create. Since the early 1990s, in contrast, budget deficits have been shrinking in

relative and absolute terms. The broad context of the deficit is missing from public discussions of the economy: the current bipartisan drive to eliminate the deficit is occurring in the midst of falling wages, corporate downsizing, and the Federal Reserve's push for zero inflation.

What are the likely economic consequences of all these things happening at once? In one of the following articles Thomas I. Palley, a professor of economics at the New School for Social Research, argues that our next recession might turn into a depression. The accompanying article, by Robert A. Levine, a former Congressional Budget Office economist, fits the Palley scenario into history, likening President Bill Clinton's economic policies to those of Winston Churchill in the 1920s, when, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, Churchill followed the counsels of orthodoxy and deflated first the British and then the world economy as the Great Depression loomed.

Unfortunately, everything Levine says against the Clinton policies applies even more strongly to those of the Dole-Gingrich Republicans. The "demand-side alternative" he outlines as a way back from Palley's brink has no champion in this year's election.

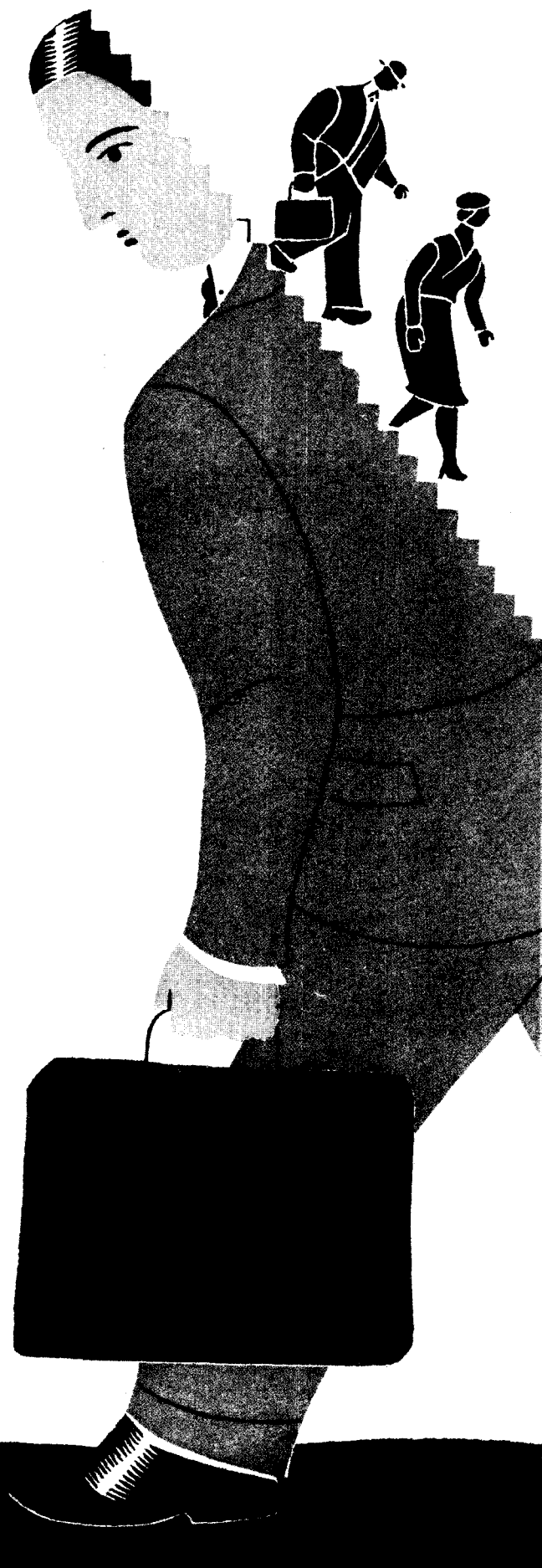
The Forces Making for an Economic Collapse

by THOMAS I. PALLEY

*Why a
depression could
happen*

ECONOMISTS are hardly renowned for their ability to predict the economic future. In 1929 Irving Fisher, perhaps the greatest of all American economists, confidently predicted that the stock market would go on to new highs and that the expansion of economic prosperity would continue, with no end in sight. Less than two months later came the crash; the economy had already entered what was to become the Great Depression. Published in 1987, Ravi Batra's best-selling *The Great Depression of 1990* predicted just what the title says. So much for predictive accuracy.

Compounding the problem of prediction is the tendency to believe that each business-cycle boom will last forever—that the business cycle is dead. Predictions of when the next recession will occur aside, however, there are now solid grounds for believing that the economy is again vulnerable to the sort of seismic shock that generated the Great Depression. The period from 1950 to 1970 is often referred to as the Golden Age of American capitalism. Real per capita income grew in those years at 2.25 percent a year, and prosperity was democratized as huge numbers of Americans entered the middle class. Indeed, a new working-middle class was created, as blue-collar workers came to enjoy the bene-



fits of homeownership, and rising wages allowed them to buy household appliances and new cars and to take vacations.

Since 1970 this expansion and diffusion of prosperity has stopped, and the Golden Age has been replaced by a Leaden Age, in which economic growth has been accompanied by falling wages and rising unemployment. Real (in terms of purchasing power) average weekly wages peaked in 1973, at \$308.03 (1982 dollars), and by 1991 had fallen to \$260.37, a decline of 15.5 percent. Yet the productivity of American workers increased by 11 percent over the same period. From 1951 to 1974 unemployment averaged 4.65 percent; from 1975 to 1993 it averaged 6.97 percent.

This waning of prosperity reflects a shift from the Main Street capitalism of the Golden Age to the Mean Street capitalism of the Leaden Age. The hallmark of the former was that it generally worked for the benefit of the average citizen by sharing the fruits of growth among all. The hallmark of the latter is an economic environment that pits citizen against citizen for the benefit of those who own most of America. This shift is the direct result of a refashioning of the nation's economic architecture and a reversal of the policies associated with the Golden Age. It has opened the possibility of another Great Depression.

Since the Second World War the U.S. economy has had nine recessions, defined as two consecutive quarters of declining output. The normal pattern has involved an increase in the rate of unemployment and also "disinflation"—a decrease in the rate of inflation. The most severe of these recessions was that of 1981–1982, when unemployment exceeded 10 percent for the first time since the 1930s. The most recent recession, which began in 1990, appears to be qualitatively different from preceding recessions in that the subsequent recovery has been much milder, and the process of disinflation has continued throughout the recovery period. Thus, rather than picking up, inflation has continued to fall during the recovery, and we now have close to zero inflation. This means that were the U.S. economy to enter a new recession, it would be likely to experience deflation: prices and wages would actually fall. Were this to happen, the burden of interest payments on the debts of consumers and businesses would increase enormously, thereby making for a collapse of both consumer spending and capital spending by businesses.

It is for this reason that deflation has historically been associated with periods of economic depression. A reasonable

definition of depression is a period of prolonged unemployment in excess of 10 percent accompanied by deflation. The recession of 1981–1982 showed that rates of unemployment in excess of 10 percent are again possible,

whereas the most recent recession has raised the specter of deflation. The twin characteristics of depressions are therefore now potentially in place. Behind this new circumstance lie the changed conditions associated with the emergence of the Mean Street economy. The high level of indebtedness in the U.S. economy implies that if prices and wages start falling, spending and fresh borrowing will most likely collapse, and bankruptcies will rocket. The economy could then find itself in a contractionary spiral, with wage deflation feeding a collapse in spending, and collapsing spending feeding further wage deflation.

Prolonged Recessions, Tenuous Recoveries

ONE indication of our growing economic fragility is the recession of 1990. The accepted story is that the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and the ensuing spike in oil prices gave a sudden shock to the confidence of American consumers, damping their spending and pushing the economy into recession. This recessionary shock was amplified by the large debts that American households and corporations had built up during the 1980s.

Whereas the role of debt in propagating the recession was real and important, the consumer-shock story resembles the snowball theory of avalanches. Moreover, it illustrates the complete confusion that characterizes modern economics. On the one hand, consumers are told to spend, spend, spend! On the other, they are told to save, save, save! Similarly, whereas huge consumer debt burdens are an important component of the new economic fragility, their existence is explained by developments associated with the shift to the Mean Street economy. Debt, therefore, is both a symptom and a cause of our troubles.



Today
WITH
**WAGES DECLINING,
DEBT IS BEING INCURRED
SIMPLY TO MAINTAIN EXISTING LIV-
ING STANDARDS. THE GROWTH
OF DEBT THREATENS TO
END THE CURRENT
RECOVERY.**

Just as the causes of the 1990 recession have been poorly explained, so have its prolonged nature and the weakness of the subsequent recovery. Economists consider the recession to have ended in the first quarter of 1991, but substantive recovery did not really begin until the second half of 1993. Thus for almost three years the economy was effectively dead in the water. This kind of prolonged stagnation distinguishes the current recovery from previous postwar economic cycles. Moreover, the economic recovery has been extremely anemic by postwar standards. In the fifty months after the trough of the recession, in late 1990, the economy created 7.8 million jobs. That is 40 percent below the average rate of employment growth in the first fifty months of the previous two economic recoveries.

Throughout this period of putative recovery consumer confidence has been notably weak. Income data for 1994 show that real median wages fell by more than two percent. Thus the median household actually suffered a decline in its standard of living. Not only has income been falling, but job security has declined as corporate downsizing continues. The threat that production will be relocated to low-wage regions, both within and outside the United States, is a persistent and growing source of wage restraint.

The Fragile Household

FOREMOST among the causes of the prolonged 1990 recession and its subsequent weak recovery is an underlying deterioration in the robustness of the demand for goods and services.

The silent depression (the erosion of wages and the increase in unemployment rates) afflicting ordinary American households has weakened consumer purchasing power and shifted income away from wages and toward profits and executive salaries. This, more than anything else, has created a structural weakness in demand. This development has been

obscured, and its impact delayed, by the tremendous growth of household debt that began in the 1980s.

Expansion of household debt has always been an important source of demand growth in the U.S. economy, paving the way for expansion of the mass market. In past

decades, however, household borrowing rested on a presumption of rising incomes to pay it back, and was therefore "demand-leading."

Today, with wages declining, debt is being incurred simply to maintain existing living standards.

"Demand-leading" debt has become "demand-maintaining."

Because new borrowing causes a cumulative growth in household indebtedness and raises the interest payments debtor households must make, indirectly, to creditor households, the demand-maintaining capacity of new borrowing is unsustainable. In general, low- and middle-income households are net debtors, while high-income households (of which there are few) are net creditors. Consequently, demand-maintaining borrowing aggravates the underlying problems of weak demand and unequal income distribution.

Ultimately households hit their debt ceilings. This can be temporarily delayed—either by raising debt ceilings and allowing households to pile up more debt or by lowering credit requirements and lending to less-creditworthy households. The flood of invitations to obtain credit cards and the raising of mortgage-lending ceilings from the old "three times gross income" to "four times gross income" show that this has in fact been happening. Again, the delay is only temporary, because households may voluntarily stop borrowing when they realize their financial vulnerability. The unsustainable growth of debt, rather than the invasion of Iraq, is the likely explanation of the onset of the 1990 re-



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cession—and it also threatens to end the current recovery.

Once households run out of income to service existing debt, and borrowing stops, maintaining demand becomes difficult. Flagging demand for goods and services causes businesses to reduce output and lay off workers. This lowers wage income and further undermines households' willingness and ability to borrow, thereby worsening the underlying problem of demand.

These problems would be bad enough in an economy with strong labor unions and low unemployment, but they are likely to be worsened in an economy in which labor is weak and companies not only lay off workers but also force wage concessions from those not laid off. Widespread wage concessions could weaken demand to the point where mass layoffs occur. Such a possibility now haunts the U.S. economy, and that is why the next recession may turn into a depression.

Shaky Stabilizers

JUST as household borrowing can sustain the economy, so, too, can borrowing by the federal government. During the 1980s the federal government ran up huge deficits that were financed by borrowing to fund government spending and employment, both of which contributed significantly to demand. A large component of this spending was the defense buildup—a classic example of military Keynesianism (by no means the best sort of Keynesianism!) at work. The impact of this spending was augmented by large tax cuts for the wealthiest households in the country. A better policy would have been to give the tax cuts to ordinary households, which spend a greater share of their income. Issues of equity aside, we would have achieved the same level of demand with smaller deficits.

This period of maintaining demand through federal deficit spending is ending, and the household sector and the government sector may thus be forced into cutting spending at the same time. The pressure to cut government spending is largely political, and derives from a misunderstanding of the economics of government deficits. Though deficits can be extreme and dangerous, at less than three percent of U.S. national income our deficit is neither. Just as individual households borrow to finance homes and cars, we should expect government to borrow to finance highways, sewers, schools, airports, public buildings, and the like (the good sort of Keynesianism).

Moreover, the government plays a critical role in providing the financial sector with safe liquid assets to hold as part of its portfolios. In a growing economy with a growing financial system, we should expect government to borrow—both to fund its expenditures and to lubricate the financial system.

What the level of the deficit should be is impossible to say. Though it was certainly too high during the Reagan era, we have now moved to the opposite extreme of deficit pho-

bia. This phobia is being opportunistically exploited in order to refashion government so as to lessen the protections it gives to ordinary workers. This shift in policy is making workers more vulnerable to the discipline of the market—sharpening competition among workers for scarce jobs—and increasing the power of business over labor. This is the result of such developments as the declining value of the minimum wage, the declining value of Aid to Families with Dependent Children payments, and suggestions for limiting need-based claims on welfare. The rhetoric accompanying this retrenchment is that of ending “dependency,” yet to end dependency in any real way demands the creation of “opportunity.” This requires running the economy at high levels of employment, ensuring that jobs carry a living wage, funding education and job training, and increasing the earned-income tax credit to strengthen the incentive to work. This is not the direction of policy now. If one were to design a system not to end dependency but to increase economic insecurity the better to raise profits for employers, one would design today's economy.

The proposed balanced-budget amendment, requiring zero deficits, threatens to lock the federal government into dangerously destabilizing financial practices. In recessions, when tax revenues fall with falling economic activity, the government would have to either cut spending or increase income taxes to balance its budget. Either course would reduce total spending and aggravate the recession.

With or without a balanced-budget amendment, we appear to be following a political trajectory (sanctioned by Republicans and Democrats alike) intended to diminish greatly the economic role of government. This diminution threatens the economic stabilizers of the Golden Age, which ensure that the government automatically supports demand when the economy begins to trail off into recession. These stabilizers work through the progressive income tax and the national system of income supports. The current Republican policy proposals threaten in varying degrees to end the federal government's capacity to act as an automatic stabilizer by subcontracting its functions to the states, by reducing income-tax progressivity, and by having government “wither on the vine.”

Attempts to reform welfare by subcontracting the functions of the federal government to state governments threaten this important component of the system of automatic stabilizers. Whereas the federal government funded welfare programs on the basis of defined standards that were independent of the number of claimants, the proposed new arrangements will simply involve block grants to the states, which would not be required to respond to cyclical fluctuations in need. Under block grants the federal government would no longer automatically pump more welfare spending into the economy during recessions, which is when need goes up and demand must be stabilized.

These shifts to contractionary fiscal practices are occurring when the composition of federal outlays has itself become more contractionary. The enormous increase in the national debt arising from Reagan-era deficits has caused a leap in interest payments—now 14 percent of federal outlays. Since the debt is held primarily by the very wealthiest households, these payments amount to a “reverse Robin Hood” transfer program. The net effect is contractionary because the wealthy spend less of their income than do ordinary Americans.

When Ronald Reagan entered office, the national debt stood at just under \$1 trillion. When George Bush left office, it stood at \$4 trillion. It is hard to see what we got in return. The Reagan-Bush deficits have an almost Machiavel-

lian quality to them: unable to persuade the American public to abandon its commitment to the New Deal system of welfare, unemployment insurance, and Social Security, Presidents Reagan and Bush ran up huge debts that have financially boxed in government, thereby threatening these programs with insolvency. Moreover, since the benefits received and taxes paid by ordinary Americans have remained largely unchanged, this increase in debt has served to give the government an appearance of profligacy. Thus public opinion has turned against government, so that we are now willing to contemplate dismantling the system of automatic economic stabilizers such as the progressive income tax, unemployment insurance, Medicaid, and welfare.



The Deflationary Fed

THE other great instrument of economic stabilization has been monetary policy, which uses the Federal Reserve's control over interest rates to adjust the money supply and the availability of credit. In the past the Fed used this power to ensure high levels of employment. Today it is exclusively committed to achieving zero inflation and has been willing to accept whatever levels of unemployment are necessary to that end.

As a result interest rates and unemployment have been much higher in the 1980s and 1990s than they were in the period 1950–1970. The true unemployment resulting from this crusade against inflation far exceeds the official unemployment rate, a point eloquently documented recently by Lester Thurow in *The American Prospect*.

At the beginning of this year almost eight million people were unemployed, yielding an unemployment rate of 5.6 percent.

But an additional five million discouraged workers are not actively seeking work, because of the lack of job opportunities. There are also 4.5 million workers working part-time involuntarily. When all these workers are accounted for, the true rate of unemployment is closer to 14 percent.

Inevitably, unemployment and underemployment have weakened the position of labor and contributed to the shift in income distribution from wages to profits. Moreover, the Fed now interprets any sign of wage increases as incipient inflation, and responds by raising interest rates. Since wage increases are the means by which labor shares in productivity growth, this policy is tantamount to helping corporate and financial capital to gang up on labor.

The Federal Reserve vividly illustrated its new stance in 1994, when it raised interest rates six times. Just as the long-awaited economic recovery was picking up steam, the Fed slowed employment growth. It claimed that its action was necessary to prevent inflation from accelerating, but never produced compelling evidence of the danger of inflation. Defenders of the Fed say that it will always be criticized for taking away the punch bowl just when the economic party is warming up. However, the real problem is that most working Americans haven't been invited to the party.

The Federal Reserve is constantly trying to persuade it-

The
**STRUCTURAL
CHANGES IN LABOR
MARKETS, INCLUDING THE
DECLINE OF TRADE UNIONS, MAKE
IT MORE LIKELY THAT WAGES
WILL CRUMBLE IN A
SEVERE ECONOMIC
DOWNTURN.**



self that inflation is accelerating in order to justify its predisposition to raise rates.

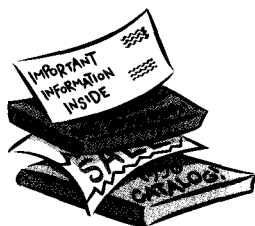
This is a dangerous game: given the fragility of the current economy, a rate increase could halt the recovery and send the economy into a tailspin. It is not clear that reversing interest rates could then straighten the economy out again. This is surely the lesson of the last recession, which required three years' worth of interest-rate cuts to produce a meaningful recovery.

The Fed has been lucky so far to escape the consequences of its policies. The wave of mortgage refinancings and household-loan consolidations that took place in the late 1980s and the early 1990s reduced the amount of debt service that households had to pay and thus helped to stave off a deeper recession. However, such refinancing is ultimately limited by the amount of other debt taken on when interest rates were at their peak and by the number of mortgages—gradually this stock has been exhausted. And because of the shift to variable-rate mortgages, the refinancing of which is not worthwhile (except to lock in rates), refinancing is not likely to provide such stimulation again. Consequently, demand will be more fragile in the next recession, and recovery harder to achieve.

There are other barriers to refinancing and low rates. During the last recession housing prices fell, and many homeowners

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help to explain the enormous increase in household borrowing that occurred in the 1980s, and have served to mitigate the adverse consequences of the polarization of income distribution. Now the inexorable force of demographics is turning against the economy, and it is unlikely to be offset by the influx of young immigrants, who tend to enter on the bottom rung of the economic ladder, with low incomes, poor job prospects, and little access to credit. Their net contribution to demand will not compensate for the aging of middle-class America.

Finally, this demographic reversal is compounded by the system for financing Social Security. Contributions to Social Security are economically equivalent to a tax. Right now payments into Social Security vastly exceed payments out, because large numbers of Baby Boomers are still working. This situation will continue through the first decade of the twenty-first century, so that Social Security contributions will

in the Northeast and California saw their equity eroded. Banks won't refinance without equity, and if housing prices fall in the next recession, this problem will be compounded. At the same time, banks have been lowering credit standards, increasing the risk of default. This risk is reflected in market rates, which means that there are limits to how low the Fed will be able to push rates in the event of another recession.

Demographics and Depression

THE aging of the Baby Boom generation and the generalized graying of America also increase the likelihood of an economic depression. Household expenditure patterns have a life cycle, with people tending to borrow and spend more when they are young. In middle age, after child-rearing is over, people begin to save more, in order to pay off their debts and to provide for old age.

The size of the Baby Boom, and the fact that Baby Boomers delayed starting families, have made these life-cycle forces work in the economy's favor for the past twenty years. They

be a net contractionary drain on the economy. In recent years this contractionary effect has been offset by federal spending. Current moves to balance the federal budget mean that the contractionary effect will be increasingly felt.

Labor Markets and Globalization

PERHAPS the single most important factor in the growing fragility of the economy is developments in labor markets. Deriving from both structural change within the economy and adverse economic policy, these developments have caused declining wages and widespread job insecurity. Capital mobility has increased, enabling firms to freeze wages and benefits or to obtain outright concessions under the threat of relocation to low-wage regions. Lower transportation costs, improved electronic communications and long-distance management technologies, and the deskilling of jobs through technology have all made it easier to shift operations to low-wage regions, even if the labor in those regions is unskilled.

Worsening the wage squeeze is a free-trade policy that has lowered tariffs. Tariffs reduce the incentive to produce overseas, and tariff reductions increase the profitability of expatriate production, thus exacerbating the threat to wages and jobs posed by firms' enhanced ability to move. The temporary job gains resulting from exports of machinery and equipment for new factories overseas have been more than offset by the job losses that have followed when production has moved and factories here have closed. Moreover, this trend toward actual or threatened expatriate production shows no sign of abating. The North American Free Trade Agreement and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade both lowered tariffs and are likely to increase the pressure on the wages of most Americans.

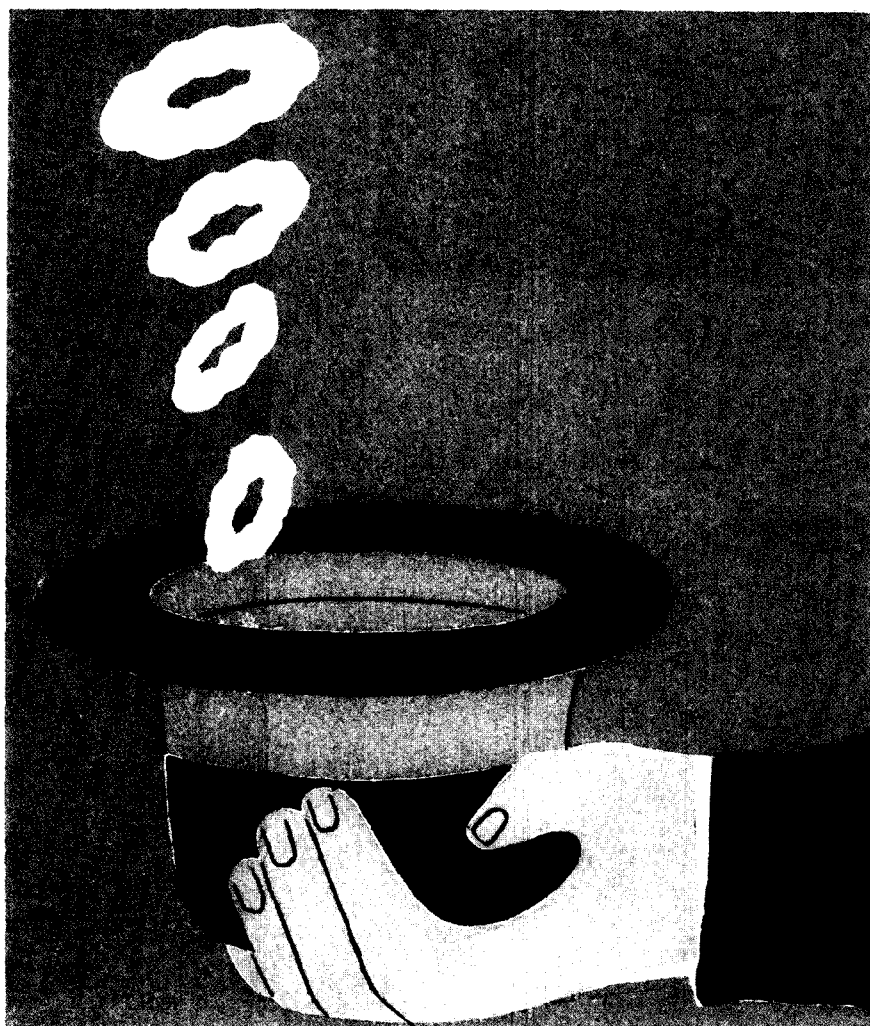
Also contributing to the pressure on wages has been the decline in trade-union power. Union membership has fallen from approximately 35 percent of the work force in 1954 to 14 percent in 1994. Unionization among private-sector workers is a mere 11 percent. In part this decline reflects the declining size of those industries in which unions historically were strongest. But it also reflects the antagonism that many American nonunion workers feel toward unions, which have come to be viewed as just another special interest, without any particular moral standing.

This change in popular perception has been disastrous for both union and nonunion workers. Unions depend for their long-term survival on popular support, and as that support has waned, they have become increasingly vulnerable to decertification drives by management and to replacement by nonunion workers. But the existence of strong unions confers benefits on nonunion workers, since companies are willing to pay higher wages and provide more benefits to prevent the spread of unionization. The decline of unions has been accelerated by the politically driven turn in policy at the National Labor Relations Board which occurred in the 1980s—most forcefully exemplified by the Reagan Administration's crushing of the air-traffic controllers' strike. This has made

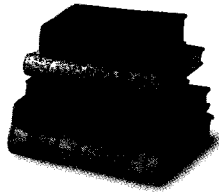
the creation of unions more difficult, union decertification and the replacement of striking union workers less difficult.

Taken together, these changes have significantly weakened the position of American workers relative to companies. This trend shows no sign of abating. The structural changes in labor markets make it more likely that wage levels will crumble in a severe economic downturn.

Businesses are increasingly willing to subcontract work and to use poorly paid temporary workers (who are in fact semi-permanent). The availability of large numbers of unemployed workers means that wage concessions will be relatively easy to obtain in a downturn. In this regard the deep recession of 1981–1982 was a significant harbinger. It marked the first time since the Second World War that wage concessions and givebacks were widespread. Beyond a certain point the position of labor in the economy cannot get weaker without grave macroeconomic consequences. Household debt burdens could become intolerable, consumer spending could collapse, financial markets could be confronted by a wave of defaults, and economic activity would plummet. It is hard to see how policy could turn such a situation around.

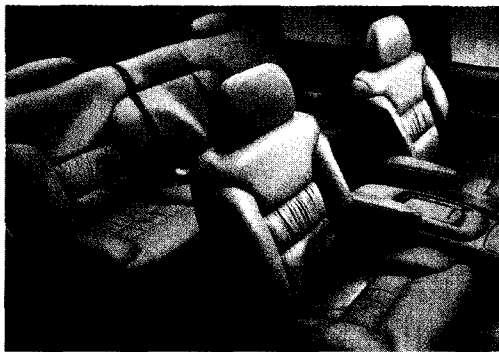


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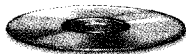


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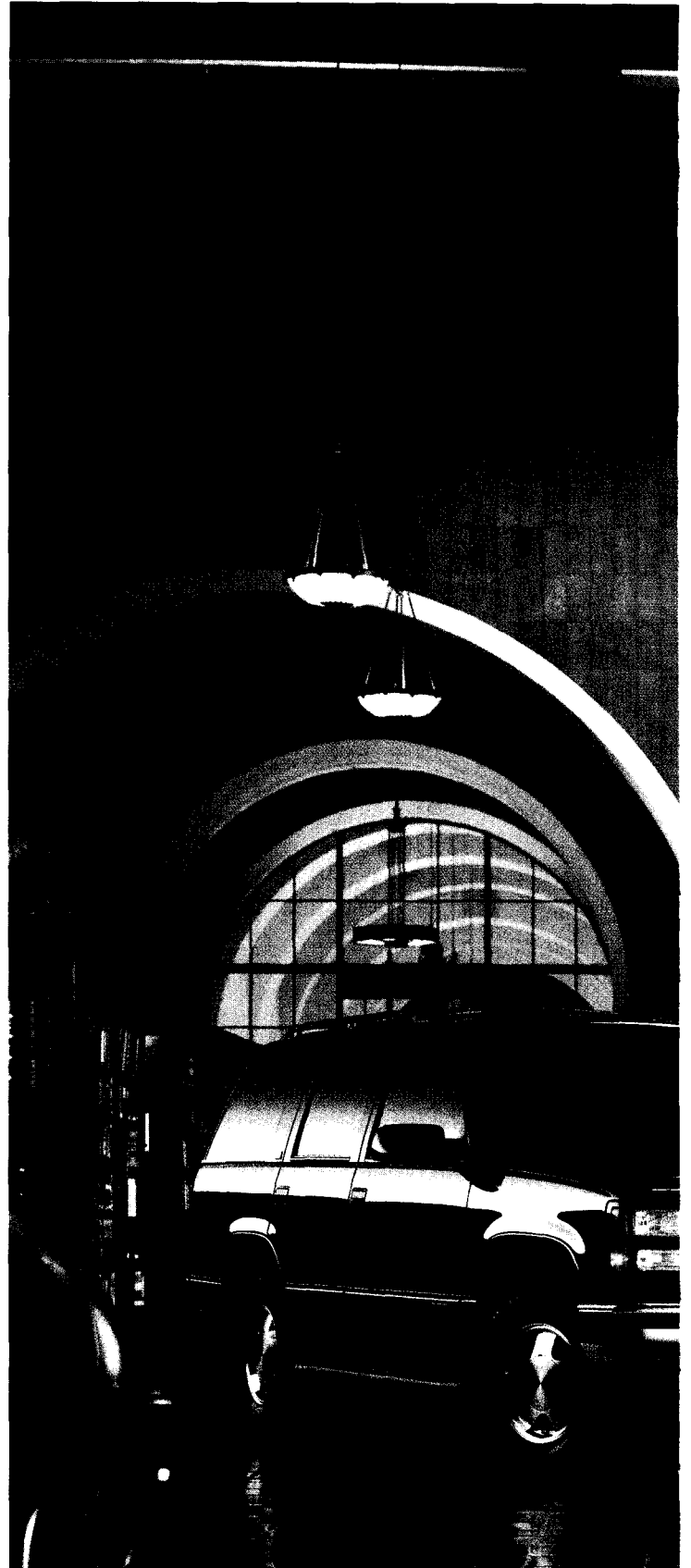
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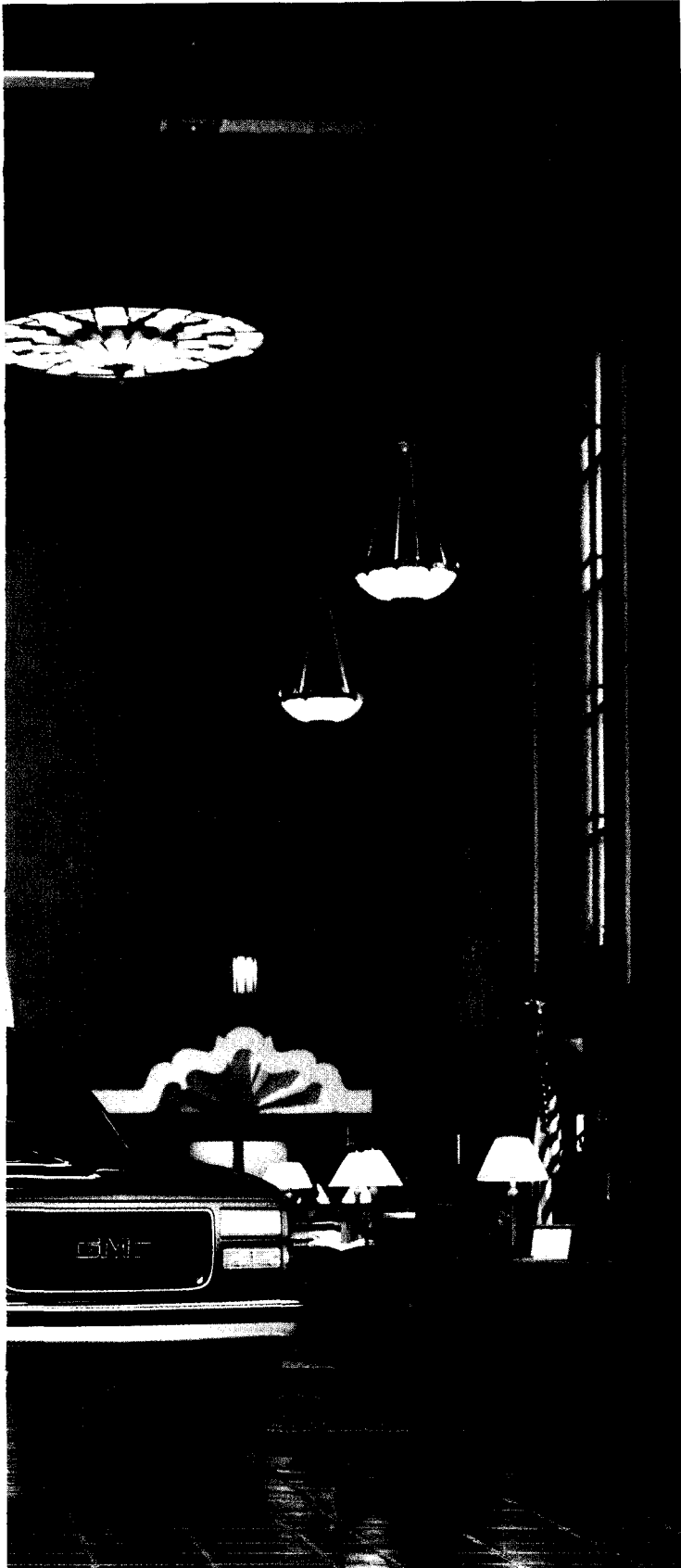


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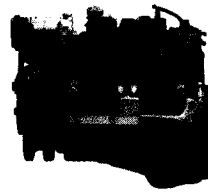


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The Internationalization of Deflationary Policy

CHANGES in the international economy and the push for global free trade also make a depression more likely. Economists assert that free trade is good for American workers, and they have persistently advocated the elimination of tariffs. But they draw no distinction between, say, trade with West Germany and trade with Indonesia.

Without doubt international trade promotes product choice and lowers prices through international competition. However, when trade rests exclusively on wage differentials, as does most trade with the Third World, it implicitly becomes an instrument for pushing down wages and pushing up profits. Free trade promotes competition not only between individual products but also between different economic systems. Thus it can become a force for implementing the lowest standards in workplace safety, environmental protection, and social-welfare legislation, since business in advanced countries will push to eliminate these costs in order to remain internationally competitive.

In this fashion ill-considered free trade can promote a "race to the bottom" that lowers wages, job security, and social-welfare standards. This possibility has become all the more real with the tremendous increase in the ability of business to organize production in a global way, most often in underdeveloped countries. The greater mobility of capital, and improved global communication and transportation systems, will make the race to the bottom a much more severe problem in the future.

This prospect is clearly evident from the emerging data on the effects of NAFTA. The early numbers are in, and they are not good. The U.S. merchandise trade surplus with Mexico reached a peak of \$5.4 billion in 1992, the last year before NAFTA was approved. By 1994 it had fallen to \$1.3 billion, and by the end of 1995 it had become a deficit of \$15.4 billion. This marks a three-year deterioration of \$20.8 billion. Supporters of NAFTA claimed that every billion dollars of exports would generate 19,000 jobs. If that's true, NAFTA has already cost the U.S. economy 395,200 jobs, almost all of which were in the relatively well-paying manufacturing sector. This cost is separate from the depressing effect that Mexican daily wages of \$6.00 have had on American wages. The export of jobs will continue as companies such as Ford, Mattel, Zenith, and General Electric shift production south of the border.

Changes in international financial markets have also promoted a deflationary bias. The introduction of new electronic technologies has increasingly interlinked financial markets. Thus holders of wealth now have portfolios containing financial assets from around the world. In its perpet-

ual search for the highest rates of return, financial capital moves rapidly between countries in response to small differences in interest rates. This development has been encouraged by economic policies abolishing controls on the international movement of capital. Financial globalization has accelerated; as a result many countries have only limited control over domestic interest rates, and have thus largely lost the power to pursue expansionary policies based on low interest rates. Worse, there is now pressure to raise interest rates in order to guard against the possibility of sudden outflows of funds.

Pressures for deflationary bias have also been evident in dealings with less developed nations. Here the key institutions are the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. Both these institutions were founded to stimulate global economic expansion and development, yet getting aid from them, particularly the IMF, has increasingly been made contingent on the implementation of "financial reform" programs that involve disinflation, cutting welfare and government spending, deregulation, and the abolition of capital controls. This list of reforms effectively serves to lock a country's domestic economic policy into a contractionary stance rather than promoting adjustments that encourage sustainable growth.

Finally, developments in the economics profession increasingly cast a deflationary shadow across the world's economies. This is because most economists support policies of zero inflation achieved by high real interest rates, fiscal austerity, balanced budgets, limited social and infrastructure spending, free trade, and the globalization of financial markets. Since economists act as policy advisers around the world, the economics profession has become a de facto means for coordinating and implementing deflationary policy on a global scale. This contrasts with the Golden Age, when the economics profession advocated Keynesian policies of robust demand, high employment, and low interest rates, and thereby served to foster global expansion.

The past twenty-five years have witnessed a persistent weakening of structural conditions within the U.S. economy. This weakening has been predicated on changes in labor markets which have undermined the position of American workers, polarizing income distribution and increasing job insecurity. The effects of these changes have been obscured by a debt binge by households and government, and by favorable demographic factors. However, households now face increasing financial constraints, government faces political constraints, and the demographic situation is changing radically. At the same time, in the face of increased capital mobility, wages continue to decline and job insecurity widens. These are the grounds for believing that the next economic recession could spiral into a depression. ☸

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The Economic Consequences of Mr. Clinton

by ROBERT A. LEVINE

The belief that balancing the budget must take precedence over every other economic consideration has captured the minds of President Bill Clinton and his advisers. In this essay a former economic policymaker takes a critical look at the economic logic and portentous history behind a new orthodoxy he regards as dangerous

IN 1925, a decade before his *General Theory of Employment, Interest, and Money* revolutionized thinking about economic policy, John Maynard Keynes wrote an essay titled "The Economic Consequences of Mr. Churchill." He took the then Chancellor of the Exchequer to task for having brought the pound back to the gold standard too soon after the First World War and at too high a value. Keynes predicted dire economic consequences. He was right. The British economy stagnated, resulting in years of unemployment above 10 percent even before the Great Depression. Because Britain was still central to world trade, its deflation spread deflation around the globe.

Seventy years later the world economy, now led by the United States, is on a dangerously parallel path. In the 1990s received economic wisdom has substituted for the gold standard deficit reduction as the central instrument, with zero inflation as the central goal, of economic policy.

The effects are disturbingly similar to those of the orthodoxy of the 1920s before Keynes's *General Theory* suggested that deliberate government deficits could be used to stimulate employment. In recent years the richest nations in the world have suffered increasing unemployment (and in the United States increasing inequality) and social unease even in good times, with worse to come when the cycle turns down.

Keynes contended that Churchill had erred because “lacking . . . instinctive judgement, he was deafened by the clamorous voices of conventional finance; and, most of all, because he was gravely misled by his experts.” The same is true of Bill Clinton. In his first few months as President he surrendered the traditional liberal Democratic stress on expanding demand, leaving conventional finance in possession of the field. This not only weakened the government’s ability to increase the demand for labor but also made impossible more than nominal investment in programs to improve the adaptability of job seekers to available jobs. One major reason for the President’s defection was that his own experts in the ranks of academic economists and in his Administration had turned to pre-*General Theory* orthodoxy. Therein lies an important part of the tale that climaxed but did not end in the 1994 Republican congressional victory and the great budget battle of 1995–1996. A high point was the President’s acceptance, in mid-July of last year, of the Republican goal of a balanced budget in seven years. By then the only real issue that remained was the rate of federal withdrawal from support of the economy and of those left behind by prosperity.

With balance as the sole criterion for budgeting, and zero inflation as the sole objective, what used to be called full employment has been forgotten, even though the Humphrey-Hawkins Act of 1978 still mandates it as a central national goal. The problem is one of long-term change, not recession. Even the *low* unemployment rates of the good times of the 1980s and 1990s almost match the *high*s of the 1950s and 1960s. Unemployment of six to seven percent was severe recession then; now when unemployment dips below six percent, storm warnings go up: too low an unemployment rate might be inflationary.

At the same time, inequality of earnings and income has been increasing among wage and salary earners and among American families. The rich have been getting

much richer, the poor significantly poorer. And the future looks bleak to the insecure middle class, whose fearful members are tempted to blame their ills on those who are worse off than they are. Economic stimulus is not the cure for all these problems, but lacking stronger economic growth than we have had, no remedy is possible.

When the business cycle turns down again, and unemployment rises from its already high lows, the political and social effects may go beyond grumbling and petty meanness to expanding extremism in many areas of American life.

Clinton’s Case

TO say that the previously Keynesian economists in the Clinton Administration have been captured by conservative orthodoxy is not to say that they are wrong. The Keynesian models used through the 1960s broke down under the shock of oil-price increases in the 1970s. Unemployment went to levels higher than had been seen since the Depression, but attempts to reduce it by fiscal stimulus caused inflation to accelerate to rates not seen since the aftermath of the Second World War.

When the collapse of oil prices in the early 1980s made possible a return to both lower unemployment and lower inflation, the Reagan Administration tried “supply-side” economics. The resulting deficits were so huge that the Federal Reserve had to raise already high interest rates to unprecedented levels to avoid overstimulation of the economy. Supply-siders had contended that cutting tax rates would raise tax revenues, but David Stockman, Reagan’s budget director, knew better. He later admitted that he had deliberately used the deficits to paralyze government social spending and “dismantle” federal programs put in place since 1933.

Stockman’s scheme worked. The Democratic economists of the Clinton Administration contend that although



the deficits are not the fault of the Democrats, their huge presence must nonetheless dominate the Administration's fiscal policies.

Their line of argument:

- Over the past several decades the increase in U.S. productivity has slowed.
- Productivity is increased primarily by increasing capital investment, but investment has been decreasing.
- A major reason for the shortfall in investment is that because deficits must be financed by borrowing, they compete with private investment for borrowable funds, thus raising interest rates and crowding out productive investment in the private sector.

The Demand-Side Alternative

THOSE who advocate a return to stimulus counter:

- The argument that productivity increases have slowed ordinarily compares the decades before 1972 with the decades thereafter. Increases since then have in fact been slower than those of the 1950s and 1960s, but once the petroleum problems of the 1970s stopped affecting the system, productivity began to increase significantly more rapidly.
- The quantity of investment is only one factor in increasing productivity, and not the strongest one. Technological change, including organizational change, contributes virtually twice as much, and improving worker education almost as much. And in any case, business investment in plant and equipment, as a percentage of GDP, has in fact been relatively high since the end of the oil shocks.

- The crucial issues have to do with the crowding out of private-sector investment and with interest rates. In the world of classical economics, in which involuntary unemployment is by definition impossible, the total quantities of productive resources available at any time, including borrowable funds, are fixed. Thus any funds used by government must be taken away from private uses, and taking them raises interest rates for those wanting to borrow for private investment. But in the Keynesian (and the real) world, if demand is so slack as to make most investment expenditures seem risky, low interest rates may have little effect. Attempts to use monetary policy in such circumstances have been likened to pushing on a string.

Economists never have arrived at a satisfactory theory for weighting the various factors that affect investment. The cost of borrowable funds is certainly one of them, but only one. Taxation may also have important effects on investment incentives: if the returns from investment are increased by tax reduction, investment will increase. That is the central point of supply-side economics. It is a good point in the abstract, but the relative weight of the tax effect remains open to debate.

Perhaps the most important determinant of investment, however (so most economists of the 1950s and 1960s held), is the demand for products produced by new plant and equipment. If, for example, demand for automobiles is expected to increase, Ford or Honda may invest in a new plant. Whether Honda will do it in Honshū or in Ohio is a question that suggests that economic policies must increasingly be considered on the international level. Regardless, market demand remains

a crucial factor in determining investment. And fiscal policy contributes directly to market demand. If the economy is operating at less than full employment, then increased government spending or tax reduction or both can increase demand for goods and services and consequently increase investment in capital goods to make products to supply the demand.

Which economic policies will best increase productivity and growth thus remains an issue much more open

Debate
SHOULD
BE REOPENED. ECONOMISTS AND POLITICAL LIBERALS MUST CHALLENGE THE CURRENT ACCEPTANCE OF DEFICIT BUSTING AS THE SINE QUANON OF ECONOMIC POLICY.





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Standing clockwise
from left:
Walter Morgan,
Larry Gilbert,
Tom Wargo.
Sitting: Larry Laoretti.

than is suggested by current orthodoxy. President Clinton, Senator Bob Dole, Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan and Vice-Chairman Alice Rivlin, point in one direction: balance the budget to reduce competition for investable funds. Some very respectable economists but few politicians, in the United States or elsewhere, point the other way: increase investment by increasing demand.

The Fallacious Family

Analogy

THE whole story, however, like all policy stories, is primarily one of politics, not economics. Deficit spending has been considered politically dishonorable for a long time—before, during, and after the Keynesian heyday. The reason is expressed in the observation that elected officials enjoy the benefits of spending on voters but abhor the penalties of imposing taxes—and thus the political incentives that encourage irresponsible deficit spending must be controlled, perhaps even by a balanced-budget amendment.

The popular analogy is to a spendthrift family borrowing to live beyond its means. That analogy is dubious, for three reasons.

First, even thrifty families borrow for long-term purposes, many of which—their children's education, for example—may be expected to increase future income. A substantial part of federal spending is similar: it is investment to increase future national income. Indeed, more than half of the states' constitutions require balanced operating budgets, but they separate out capital budgets to allow borrowing for long-term investment projects.

Second, some government functions fall outside the family metaphor: if federal deficits can have major effects on employment and other crucial economic indicators, then national requirements for growth and stability may supersede the simple morality of balancing income and outgo.

Third, few families go broke because family members are borrowing from one another. Most federal borrowing is from citizens or institutions that are part of the American family; less than a quarter of our national debt is owned by foreigners. For that reason, although deficits burden our children with debt, debt also provides a good many of our children with such assets as government bonds, representing the ownership of that debt. The national debt is now about two thirds of the GDP. At the end of the Second World War it was greater than the GDP, but postwar prosperity worked the ratio down. What threatens our children now is not the debt, most of which they will owe to themselves. Rather, it is economic policy aimed at achieving slow growth at best, which will severely constrain their chances of finding good jobs.

Even if the analogy between federal and family budgets is a poor one, however, controlling spending is a valid and politically compelling goal. Advocates of fiscal stimulus need to

dissociate themselves from any idea that all spending is good. Any proposed program that questions the current exclusive emphasis on budget balancing must equally insist on close examination of each government expenditure. That should include porky public works, entitlements, both individual and corporate welfare, and "tax expenditures"—loopholes in personal and corporate taxes that, for bad reasons or good (for example, low-income housing), attempt to achieve the same purposes as appropriated expenditures. The current budget battle shows how difficult it is to do this in the face of entrenched interests. Both the Administration and the congressional Republicans have made brazen exceptions for special interests, even as they exchange rhetoric over budget-balancing purity.

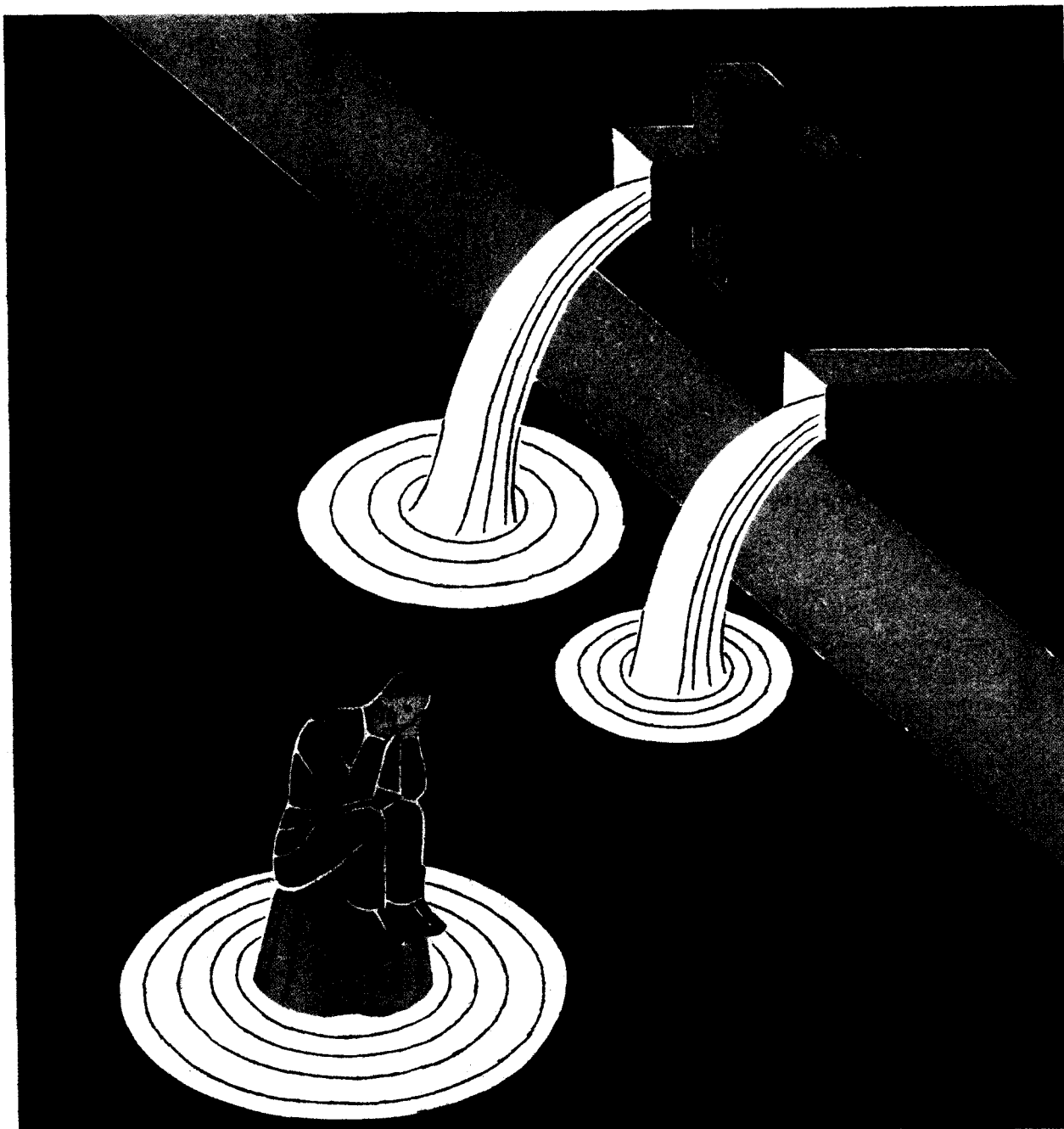
Reopen the Debate

IN any case, the political reality is that the drive toward a perpetually balanced budget is not going to be reversed anytime soon. Even now, however, groundwork for a new direction can be laid.

- *The debate should be reopened.* Economists and political liberals should challenge the current acceptance of deficit busting as the sine qua non of economic policy.

- *Concepts should be re-examined.* Even conservative economists who put great emphasis on budget balancing agree that the annual balancing of nominal budget accounts (which imperfectly reflect federal spending) regardless of economic conditions makes no sense. A recession reduces tax revenues, but reducing expenditures to match can turn the recession into a depression. That's what Herbert Hoover tried. Economists should suggest an alternative, such as the *structurally* balanced budget—one that would be balanced if the economy were performing well. In addition, the case needs to be made vigorously for a separate capital budget for public investment financed by borrowing.

- *The debate should be internationalized.* Whatever the United States tries to do with its own economy it probably can do. The American economy is strong, and the United States is a large enough market that the country can put its own economic policy into effect. The same could be true of the European Union if it were able to act as an actual union. It is still a collection of nations, however, with the economic power in Bonn and Frankfurt. If the Germans were willing to relax their anti-inflation constraints, West European economic policy could still turn the continent away from the instability exemplified by the strikes that paralyzed France in December of last year. Some French politicians and economists are beginning to propose movement in that direction, but France cannot reverse course without Germany. And early this year, as French unemployment moved to almost 12 percent and German to above 10, the president of the Bundesbank, Hans Tietmeyer, was giving no ground. Speaking at a worldwide economics conference in Switzerland, he



said that the bank would not alter its monetary policy for the purpose of lowering unemployment. Meanwhile, on the other side of Eurasia, Japan's will to pull itself up by its economic bootstraps remains unclear. Yet coordinated stimulus in all three centers of the First World would be far more likely to succeed than individual national or regional efforts.

In the American political dialogue, going beyond the parroted slogans of a balanced budget is unlikely until the November election. It may also be unlikely afterward, no matter what the outcome of the election. If so, the United States can probably continue on the current economic course, at least for a while. Yes, inequality will increase and insecurity grow. But the economy will also grow, and if the rising tide is no

longer lifting all boats, not many are being left in the mud.

Sooner or later the tide will go out. The real and deep danger is that if the economic cycle turns toward sharp recession, and if balanced-budget deficit-bashing remains the order of the day, either by constitutional amendment or by rigid budgetary enactment, then we could be back in 1932.

History tested then-prevalent economic theories in the 1920s and 1930s, and those theories failed their tests. The economic imbalances and orthodoxies of the 1920s led to the Great Depression, and that in turn opened the door to Nazism and to war. Economic theorists and, more important, economic decision-makers ignore such experience at great peril to the world. ♣

EXPRESS YOURSELF: IT'S

by BRAD HOLLAND

*If you're confused
about Postmodernism,
that may mean you
understand it*

MORE than a quarter century ago the painter Ad Reinhardt declared that his new black-on-black canvases were the "last pictures which anyone can make." The critics raved, and many agreed with the "Black Monk" that his masterpieces would be history's "ultimate" paintings. Unfortunately, other artists refused to hand in their brushes, so art continued.

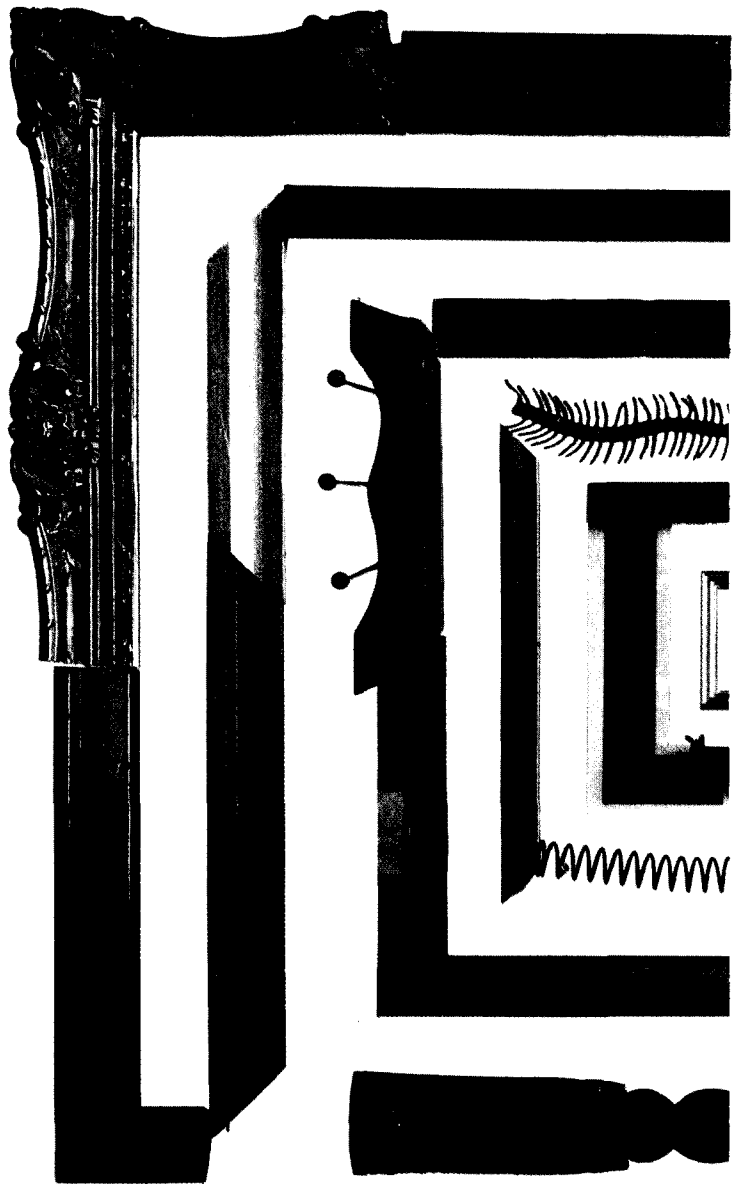
Ever since, modern art has resembled a doomsday cult on the day after the deadline for the end of the world. The true believers awoke one day to find that the sun had risen, the mad prophet had disappeared, and they all had to find something to do with the rest of their lives.

This predicament is now called Postmodernism, and if you're confused about it, that's probably because you're beginning to understand it. If you're an artist, what follows will be old hat. But as a service to the layman I can define a few of the basic terms.

Modern Art: In the future "modern art" will mean "the kind of art they did in the twentieth century." Like "Baroque" or "Romanesque," "modern" will be a term used to date something.

Cubism: A movement started by Picasso and Braque to distinguish their work from what Cézanne had already done. Critics named it Cubism. In modern art, naming your art movement is a must. Cubism is still the most important modern-art movement, for the same reason that John D. is still the most important Rockefeller. All the other movements are like downtown Rockefellers, and you can forget about them unless you expect to encounter an art category on *Jeopardy*.

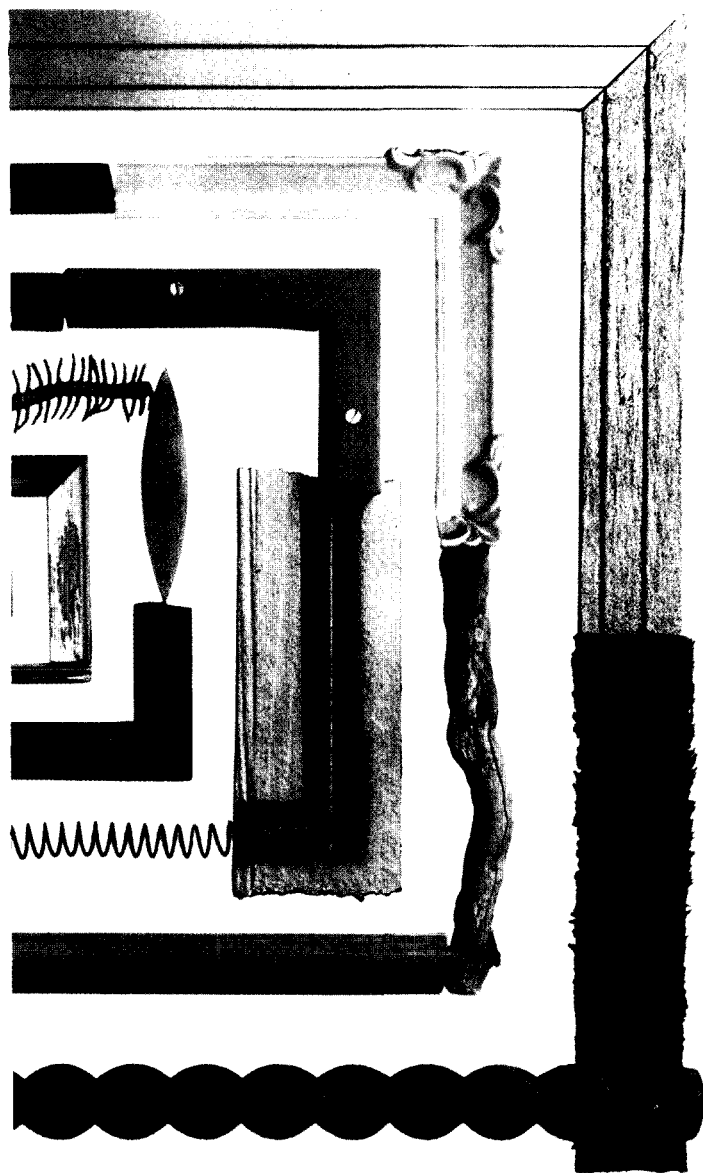
Futurism: This was a movement of intellectuals who



wanted to replace tradition with the modern world of machinery, speed, violence, and public relations. It proves that we should be careful what intellectuals wish for, because we might get it.

Dada: Dada artists were ironists. Duchamp was their star, and his masterpiece was a urinal. He ended his life playing chess. He claimed he was making an art statement. My grandfather was a prankster too, and he ended his life playing chess. But since he did it to keep from being bored, no one thought it proved anything. This suggests that Dada artists are exempt from the general rule that ironists are the biggest victims of their own irony.

LATER THAN YOU THINK



Surrealism: An archaic term. Formerly an art movement, no longer distinguishable from everyday life.

Abstract Expressionism: After the Second World War the United States emerged as the world's superpower. American companies like Cities Service and Esso, which had once been regional businesses, became international corporations. They adopted abstract names like Citgo and Exxon to give themselves world-class status. Since multinational giants couldn't have little pictures of red barns or weeping clowns in the lobbies of their Bauhaus buildings, Abstract Expressionism emerged as the world's most prized form of interior decoration.

Pop Art: In aristocratic societies rich people used to commission exquisite paintings for their walls. Years later cheap imitations would filter down to calendars in gas stations. In our democratic society this works backward. Here art begins as the kind of picture you'd find on a matchbook cover. Then in a few years expensive imitations of it wind up on the walls of plastic surgeons and Hollywood agents.

New Wave Art: Modern art as it would have been done by the Big Bopper, the Del-Vikings, or Sam the Sham and the Pharaohs. New Wave art was the rage of the eighties. Now it's exhibited in oldies-but-goodies museums, usually in black-and-pink frames.

Graffiti Art: Many people decorate their homes with designer graffiti, even though most of them would probably have real graffiti scoured off the walls of their buildings. Personally, I think that graffiti artists should go to the homes of their patrons with spray cans and make their living rooms look like subway cars. This would separate serious lovers of graffiti from uptowners spelunking for art thrills.

Realism: Currently, realistic paintings are valued for their craftsmanship. In the next century, when art will be packaged as virtual-reality software, realistic paintings will sell the way Shaker furniture does now. Shaker furniture will sell the way Van Gogh paintings do. Pop-It Beads owned by Jackie Onassis will come to market only occasionally.

Commercial Art: Anything done by an artist with a cash register by the door. Commercial art is traditionally delivered to a client in a brown-paper bag with an invoice stapled to the outside.

Fine Art: With commercial art you find out how much they're going to pay you, and you do the work. With fine art it's the other way around.

"That's Not Art, That's Illustration": Almost everybody is an artist these days. Rock-and-roll singers are artists. So are movie directors, performance artists, makeup artists, tattoo artists, con artists, and rap artists. Movie stars are artists. Madonna is an artist because she explores her own sexuality. Snoop Doggy Dogg is an artist because he explores other people's sexuality. Victims who express their pain are artists. So are guys in prison who express themselves on shirt cardboard. Even consumers are artists when they express themselves in their selection of commodities. The only people left in America who seem not to be artists are illustrators.

Love Me, Love My Art: Norman Rockwell used to say if a picture is going badly, put a dog in it. If it is going really badly, put a bandage on the dog's paw. This is the basic principle behind victim art.

Tattoo Art: I've never liked tattoos, although I think they improve some people—especially the kind of people who hang around tattoo parlors.

Kitsch: In my lifetime kitsch has progressed from the cynical sentimentality of Maxfield Parrish calendars to the sentimental cynicism of Batman movies.

Style: Style is the most valuable asset of the modern artist. That's probably why so many styles are reported lost or stolen each year.

Tradition: There are still some traditionalists, mostly employed by art schools, who continue to paint like members of the Ash Can School, with earnest First World War realism. For years it has pleased the avant-garde to keep these Amish around to portray the art establishment. But for generations the real art establishment has been made up of earth sculptors, body piercers, and topless cello players. It's been a long time since a painter of the Ash Can School has even had a prayer.

The Avant-garde: More than a hundred years ago some French bohemians decreed that the purpose of art was to shock the middle classes. It may have been a great idea back then. But these days the middle classes aren't paying attention. They're all on *Jerry Springer* or *Ricki Lake*, talking about their cross-dressing experiences or sex with the baby-sitter. Cutting-edge artists have to watch this stuff in despair and complain about the state of American culture even as they demand more grant money to do their cutting-edge art. In the future this spectacle of the middle classes shocking the avant-garde will probably become the textbook definition of Postmodernism.

"Sometimes You Gotta Break the Rules": One of the things not enough people appreciate about modern art is that its philosophy can be summed up as a Burger King commercial.

Craftsmanship: Traditional craftsmen worked within certain conventions. Occasionally those conventions would be redefined by acts of genius. In modern art, though, everybody has to redefine art all the time. This might have made our era another Renaissance, if only there had been a sudden explosion of geniuses in the world. But since ego is more common than genius, Postmodern art is destined to be more narcissistic than heroic.

Art Theory: The typical modern artist produces a small body of work wrapped in a theory. Some even dispense with

the work itself and exhibit only their theories, typed up. To me this seems a sensible economy of style. If the purpose of art is to redefine art, then words should do the trick. There's no use cluttering up the world with redundant examples.

Self-expression: The crowbar used by artists to pry open the Pandora's box of self-indulgence for everybody else in society. Thirty years ago it was the dream of every bohemian artist to be seen getting out of a limousine wearing blue jeans and sneakers. Today it's the dream of probably half the people in the country.

The Miracle of Authenticity: The faith that if we're all authentic and express ourselves, society will benefit. A charming ideal, but it overlooks the obvious. There are a lot of authentic jerks and idiots in the world. Encouraging them to express themselves will never do anybody much good, much less society.

Instinct: Back in the prehistoric jungle all the animals who trusted other animals got eaten. The only ones who survived to reproduce were the ones who instinctively feared everybody and bit their heads off. This explains why so many people who, like artists, trust their instincts behave like crocodiles.

Consciousness-Raising Art: An all-purpose excuse for the artist to cast himself as a pearl before the swine of democracy. Whenever I know that an artist is trying to raise my consciousness, I have flashbacks of Jane Fonda, Sissy Spacek, and Jessica Lange lecturing Congress about the realities of farm life.

Forever Jung: Postmodernists believe that truth is myth and myth truth. This equation has its roots in pop psychology. The same people also believe that emotions are a form of reality. There used to be another name for this state of mind. It was called psychosis.

Multiculturalism: I've never understood why artists, who so often condescend to the clichés of their own culture, are so eager to embrace the clichés of cultures they know nothing about.

Waiting for Van Gogh: In the world in which most of us have grown up, popular art has inherited and exploded all the forms of art that came before it. Everything from the primitive art of tribal societies to the fine art of aristocratic ones has been thrown into the cement mixer of modern culture, along with its juxtapositions of celebrity and anonymity, poverty and sudden wealth, and the continuous swooning of the popular media over trends and fads. The truth about Postmodernism is that we haven't really figured out yet how artists will thrive in modern mass societies. We're all experiments. ☸

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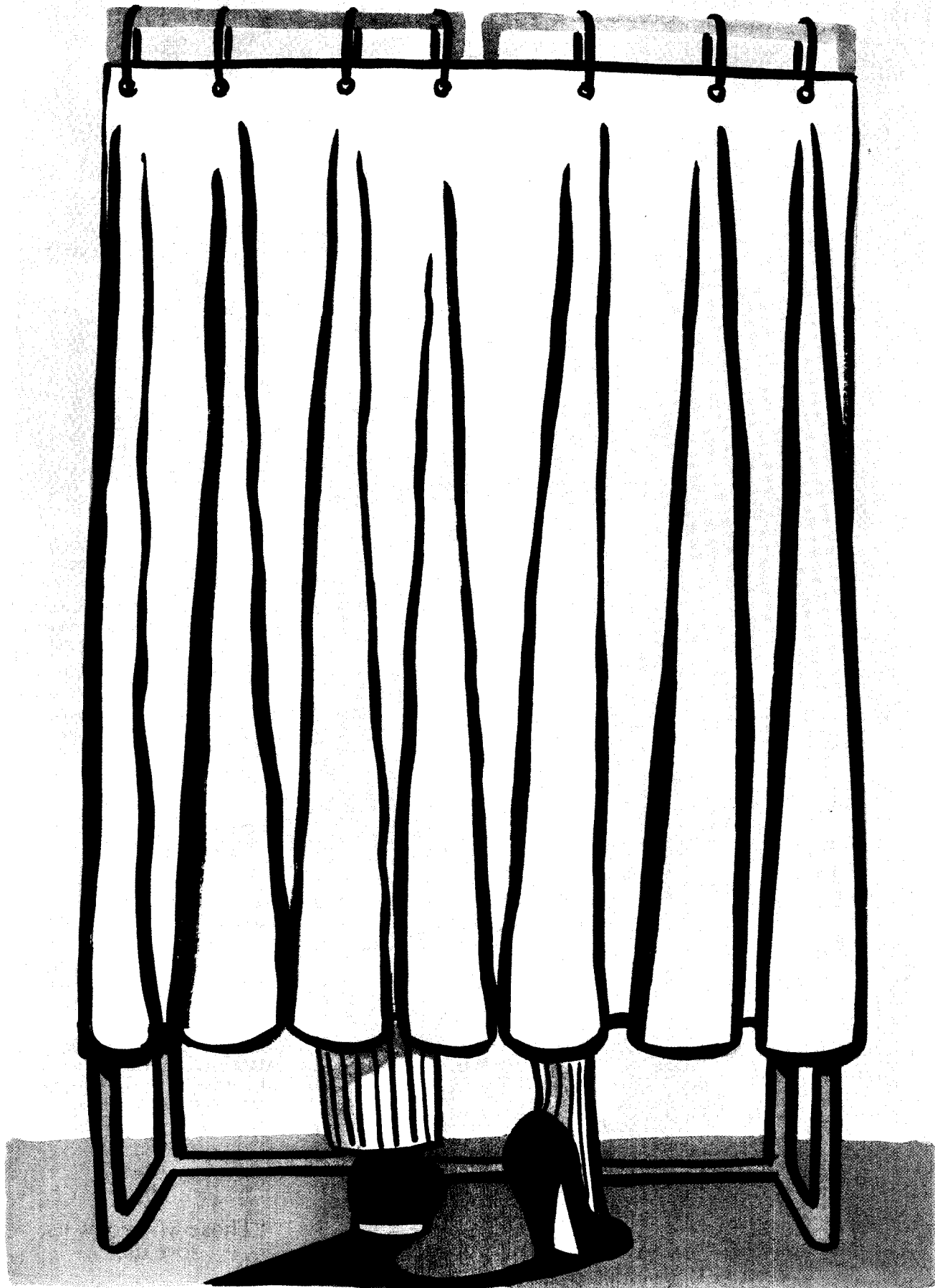
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Gap Politics

by STEVEN STARK

*The famous gender gap is
often described simply as good news
for one party—women are
moving to the Democrats.
But it's a two-way gap—even
more men have moved
to the Republicans.
Each party and
its candidates now
appear to represent,
at least in part,
the interests of one sex
against the other*

FOR many Americans, the good news in 1992 was that the country finally had a feminist President. The bad news was that the President was a man. For many others, Bill Clinton's Administration has, fairly or not, come to symbolize an attack on men and masculinity as "problems" to be overcome. If 1992 was the "Year of the Woman," 1994 brought the "Revolt of the Angry White Male." Suddenly the question that has haunted American politics since women got the vote, in 1920—Will women vote differently from men, and how will that change politics and public life generally?—had a new salience. The "gender gap" of the 1980s, a phenomenon wrongly interpreted as favoring the Democrats, was yielding to a new concept: gender realignment.

Traditionally, American party politics has had fault lines—blacks vote differently from whites and southerners from northerners. Even in the 1970s, however, gender was not one of these. "Sex was a variable it never paid to look

at," Patrick Caddell, a leading Democratic pollster, once said. Men and women tended to vote alike.

Those days are now gone. In the 1994 midterm congressional elections men voted Republican by a margin of 57 percent to 43 percent and women voted Democratic 54 percent to 46 percent for a gender gap of 22 points. Demographic breakdowns within these groups tend to reveal even wider disparities: white men went Republican in 1994 by 26 points, while unmarried women, white and nonwhite, backed the Democrats by a 32-point margin.

Along with the continuing shift of the once-solidly Democratic South to Republican control, a related trend, the gravitation of men and women to different political camps, appears to be the outstanding demographic development in American politics over the past twenty years. "I think that we're the party of Mars, but we would like to have the Venus side of the American society in our party too," Trent Lott, a



ALTHOUGH MANY MEDIA ACCOUNTS STILL SUGGEST THAT THE GENDER GAP IS GREATEST ON "WOMEN'S ISSUES," IN FACT THE GULF TODAY TENDS TO BE ON ISSUES INVOLVING THE EXISTENCE AND EXPANSION OF THE SOCIAL-WELFARE STATE.



Republican senator from Mississippi, said last year. With a gender split increasingly driving our politics, many of the issues on the national agenda—from welfare to health care to abortion—have been the bases for an indirect debate on the changing roles of women and men. And the trend will continue. “I foresee a tremendous clash around these issues continuing in the 1996 elections and beyond,” says Andrew Kohut, the director of the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press. In a mid-spring *New York Times*/CBS News poll Bill Clinton was running stronger among women against his Republican opponent than he did in 1992, but slightly worse among men.

The press discovered the gender gap some fifteen years ago. Yet most conventional accounts of the gap and its meaning continue to obscure the importance of this realignment. First, although a difference in the way each sex views political issues is nothing new, the emerging party-identification gap between the sexes is unprecedented. Each party and its candidates now appear to represent, at least in part, the interests of one sex against the other. Thus the gap is responsible for much of the changing ideological orientation of both parties—and the outcome of elections and the direction of government policy. Second, although many media accounts still give the impression that the gap is greatest on “women’s issues” such as abortion and an Equal Rights Amendment, men and women do not differ much on these issues. Rather, the gulf today tends to be on issues involving the existence and expansion of the social-welfare state.

Far more women than men supported the Clinton health-care plan—not because its architect was Hillary Clinton but because women are far less likely to be covered by existing insurance plans (more of them work part-time). Women tend to support affirmative action more than men, yet are much more in favor of government spending to support social programs. In the cultural area women are far more accepting of homosexuality than men, yet are also likelier to support banning books that advocate positions they think are dangerous. (In a clash between a real threat and an abstract ideal—say, the First Amendment—women tend to worry about the real threat far more than men do.) Even the ways politicians talk about issues affect the sexes differently. “Women have a much lower tolerance for conflict,” Celinda Lake, a Democratic pollster,

says. “Take the trade issue: Both parties kept making arguments for NAFTA by saying ‘This will increase competition.’ But women don’t like competition and they don’t respond to metaphors such as ‘leveling the playing field.’”

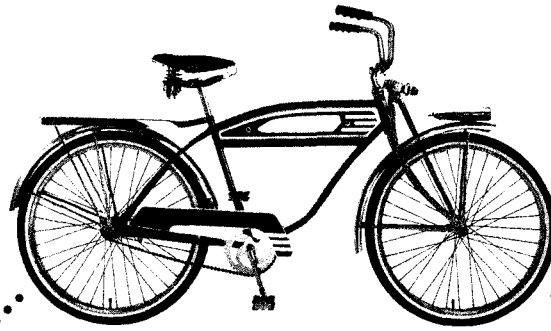
Certainly gap politics drives the current debate over welfare. The original program, Aid to Dependent Children, was designed to support women so that they could stay home and raise children—an ideal that has now changed. “Almost all welfare states were built around the concept of a nuclear family, with a wage-earning man,” says Theda Skocpol, a sociologist and political scientist at Harvard. As the norm changes, support for programs linked to it changes too. If one sees the current welfare state as enabling women to be freer of men—and, perhaps, more hostile to them—then dismantling that state may not seem like such a terrible idea.

Finally, most media accounts continue to describe the gap as helping the Democrats, as mobilized women answer the call of feminism. In fact the opposite has often been true, as men have turned out in strength to protect their interests. Though the press frequently describes the gender gap as one figure—say, 22 points in 1994—there are really two gaps: one among women (equaling 8 points in 1994), benefiting the Democrats, and another among men (14 points in 1994), which has recurrently benefited the Republicans more. Maybe 1996 will be the year the gender gap finally benefits the Democrats. At least until now, however, the “gendering” of American politics has sharply eroded support for the social programs for which the Democrats have traditionally stood. The two major political trends of the past fifteen years—the rise of the gender gap and our political swing to the right—are linked.

Why have the political interests and voting behavior of many women and men diverged in the past decade and a half? Is the divergence a good thing for our society? And if this is one of the major themes of our politics today, why aren’t any candidates addressing it directly?

A “Women’s New Deal”

HISTORIANS have observed that this country long defined its politics by sex far more than did other industrialized nations. Electoral politics in the nineteenth century—an all-male activity—was closely linked with cultural ideas about masculinity. With its rallies, shop



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talk, and fraternity, politics then was something akin to sports today. Manhood was frequently an issue. In 1840 the supporters of William Henry Harrison, a war hero, began an American tradition by attacking the incumbent Martin Van Buren as a fop. "Little Van—the used-up man" his enemies called him, noting that Van Buren favored ruffled shirts and had achieved a new level of effeminacy because he enjoyed taking baths. A victim of his own propaganda, the sixty-eight-year-old Harrison refused to wear a coat to his chilly inauguration in March, caught pneumonia, and died a manly death a month later.

Voting often took place in saloons; men whose party loyalty was wavering were called "Miss-Nancys"; and reformers were depicted as politically impotent. Deborah Tannen, a linguist who has written several books about differences

in how the sexes communicate, maintains that American politics retains the masculine perspective of its nineteenth-century origins. "It's still so clear that it was structured with a male audience in mind," she says. "There's all the sports analogies, the ritual opposition, the warlike debate formats, even the ways our leaders get points for being successful in military situations. The basic assumptions and rhetoric are still far more reflective of a male perspective." This was the framework within which women began to be politically active in the nineteenth century, long before they had the vote.

In Colonial times men had been viewed as "the fathers of the community," responsible for its morality. The Industrial Revolution, however, pulled men out of the home, so women assumed the role of civic custodians. Abolitionism had disproportionate support from women, and through missionary work and benevolent societies women led later morality-based movements to ban prostitution, discourage child labor, and encourage temperance. One of the earliest political surveys, in 1919, showed that women in Illinois were twice as supportive of Prohibition as men—the first recorded gender gap.

The promise of women's suffrage was that women would cleanse politics and American life of male excesses, and not simply by taking voting out of barber shops and saloons and moving it into schools. At the turn of the century the suffrage and Progressive movements were inextricably linked. As Rheta Childe Door wrote in *What Eight Million Women Want* (1910), "Woman's place is in the home. . . . But Home is not contained within the four walls of an individual home. Home is the community. The city full of people is the Family. The public school is the real Nursery." Women championed Progressive social-welfare programs, including the creation in 1912 of the Children's Bureau in the Department of Commerce and Labor, and the passage of the Sheppard-Towner Infancy and Maternity Protection Act in 1921.

In a recent pathbreaking work of social science, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers*, Theda Skocpol traces how these and other efforts undertaken by women created an early patchwork system of social programs. Previous efforts, relating to the old system of Civil War veterans' pensions, had failed—in no small part because of middle-class opposition at the turn of the twentieth century to a strong central government. The result was that unlike most European states, America had a welfare state constructed not around the "paternal" notion of work (workers' pensions and the like) but around "maternal" programs defending mothers and families, deemed weaker and needing protection. "Most of these programs, which were the forebears of the New Deal and later welfare programs, were tied into the notion that motherhood was really a form of community service," Skocpol says.

For these reasons passage of the Nineteenth Amendment

HE HAS LIVED IN MANY HOUSES,

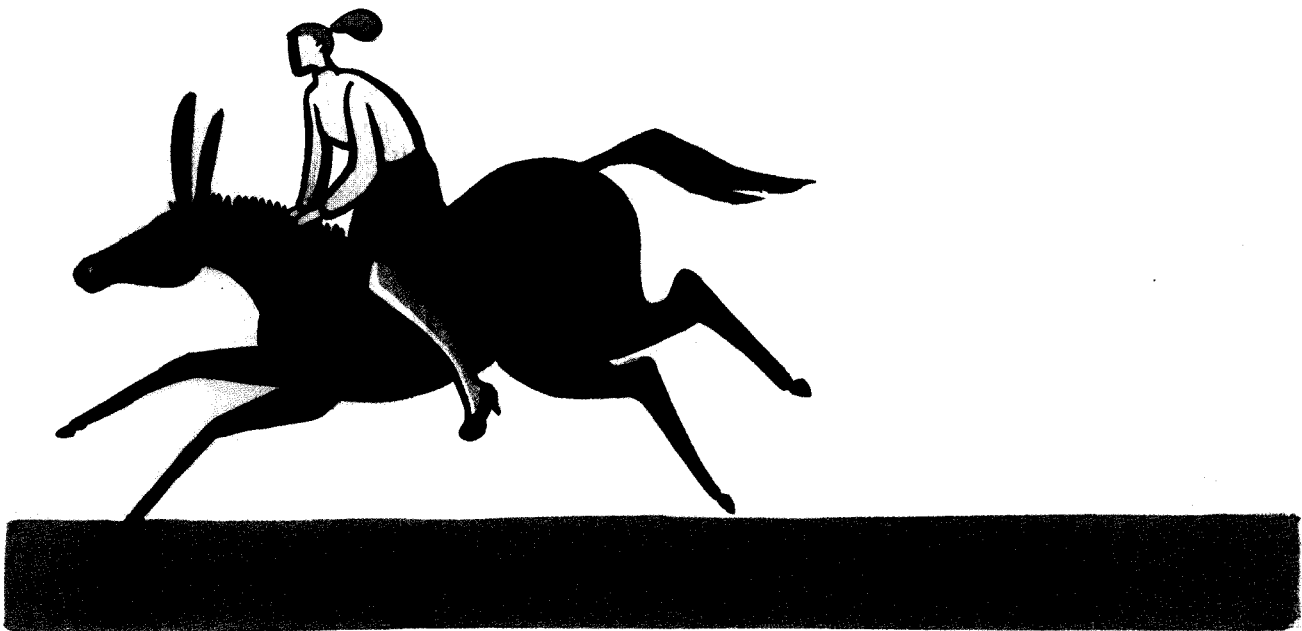
furnished rooms, flats, a hayloft,
a tent, motels, under a table,
under an overturned rowboat, in a villa (briefly) but not,
as yet, a yurt. In these places
he has slept, eaten,
put his forehead to the window glass,
looking out. He's in a stilt-house now,
the water passing beneath him half the day;
the other half it's mud. The tides
do this: they come, they go,
while he sleeps, eats, puts his forehead
to the window glass.
He's moving soon: his trailer to a trailer park,
or to the priory to live among the penitents
but in his own cell,
with wheels, to take him, when it's time
to go, to: boathouse, houseboat
with a little motor, putt-putt,
to take him across the sea
or down the river
where at night, anchored by a sandbar
at the bend,
he will eat, sleep, and press his eyelids
to the window
of the pilothouse
until the anchor-hauling hour
when he'll embark again
toward his sanctuary, harborage, saltbox,
home.

—THOMAS LUX

was widely expected to change American politics and voting patterns immediately, to the benefit of the more progressive Democrats. To almost everyone's surprise, however, it did not. For the first decade or so after women got the vote, turnout was low and conservative Republicans won most elections. By the time women did begin to vote in greater numbers, the Depression had changed American politics—in the words of Everett C. Ladd, the executive director of the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, at the University of Connecticut, reducing “the salience of moral questions and elevating a variety of economic recovery concerns” that masked the differences in the ways men and women approached politics. The Depression forced male voters to consider the benefits of a “maternal” welfare state and to change their allegiance—voting as women had been expected to

spawned. It is assumed that with Americans entering a period of consumerism and conformity after the Second World War, men and women tended to define their interests mutually, in terms of their families, and to vote much the same. To be sure, the sexes approached certain political questions differently, with men more likely to favor the use of force than women, whether in military action or in the death penalty. When Dwight Eisenhower promised in 1952 to “go to Korea” to end the war there, Roper found that women preferred him to Adlai Stevenson by six percentage points more than men.

Analysts also tended to find women voters almost everywhere to be risk-averse. Abroad, where the divisions between parties were more ideological, that meant that as women got the vote, they tended to align themselves with



vote and, in fact, now were voting. “This not only meant a New Deal for women as recipients,” Sara Evans, a professor of history at the University of Minnesota, wrote in her history of women in America, *Born for Liberty* (1989), “but . . . in many ways a *women’s* New Deal.” New Deal social programs, such as the Social Security Act of 1935 and the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, were in part drafted and promoted by the old Progressive child-welfare establishment, dominated by women whose view of government reflected their maternal view of the state. For example, Aid to Families with Dependent Children—still the program most commonly identified by politicians and the public as “welfare”—was originally designed for children and mothers; it was passed in 1935.

Long after the Depression, both parties continued to favor the growth of the welfare state that economic crisis had

church-based conservative parties as opposed to labor parties. In this country, however, the differences in the ways the sexes approached political issues hadn’t really led to differences in partisan allegiance yet. To the extent that differences existed in presidential voting from 1960 to 1980, women tended to slightly favor incumbents or candidates of the incumbent party. In 1960—despite the myth now prevailing that John Kennedy owed his victory over Richard Nixon to his appeal to women—Nixon actually carried women narrowly. Women in 1976 favored the Democrat Jimmy Carter less than men did, and women voted in greater percentages than men for Lyndon Johnson (1964) and Hubert Humphrey (1968). (In 1972 men supported the incumbent Richard Nixon by only one percentage point more than women did, as George McGovern attracted some women with a peace platform.)

Women and the Rights Revolution

DURING this period the Great Society programs of the mid-1960s were extending the social-welfare state of the New Deal while for the first time on the federal level (in the Civil Rights Act of 1964) broadly endorsing the notion of sexual equality. In the wake of the civil-rights movement many Great Society programs were aimed at the needs of the poor. Fifteen years later many were disproportionately helping women, if only for demographic reasons: with divorce rates and the number of single-parent households climbing, more women were poor, and they lived longer than men. Thus by 1982, 61 percent of Medicaid enrollees, 60 percent of Medicare recipients, 69 percent of those who received food stamps, and 67 percent of the clients of the Legal Services Corporation were women. Two thirds of the families living in federally subsidized housing were headed by women. The welfare state was more maternal than ever.

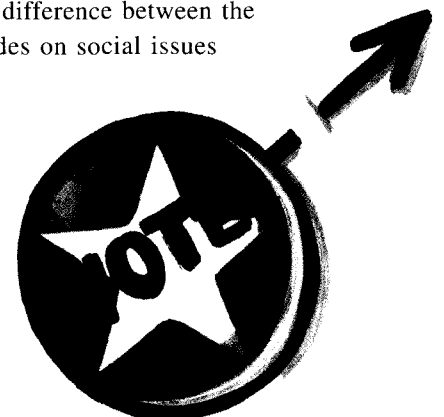
Moreover, the civil-rights legislation of the 1960s and early 1970s that was intended to benefit women directly breezed through Congress. "We put sex-discrimination provisions into everything," Representative Bella Abzug once recalled about the 1971–1972 congressional session. "There was no opposition. Who'd be against equal rights for women? So we just kept passing women's-rights legislation." Yet the very speed with which these measures passed—and the fact that many of them depended on courts to enforce or create new "rights"—meant that they lacked the popular legitimacy of laws that have been more widely debated. This might also be said about the racial rights revolution of the 1950s and 1960s on which these initiatives were modeled. Yet that often anti-majoritarian movement had a unique foundation, drawing on everything from the nation's legacy of slavery to the hosings in Birmingham, which gave it a legitimacy that women's-rights activists could not match. In fact, when it came time, in the mid-1970s, for the states to pass an Equal Rights Amendment for women, similar to the Fourteenth Amendment for blacks, the effort failed—with Texas and Tennessee being the only states of the old Confederacy to ratify it. The new Republican Party, built around the opposition of white southern males to the sexual and race revolutions, was taking shape.

The abortion wars of the 1970s also played into a general sentiment that the women's movement was securing its gains in an anti-democratic fashion. In the five years before the *Roe v. Wade* decision, in 1973, sixteen states with more than 40 percent of the nation's population had liberalized their abortion laws. In those days the issue was hardly a partisan one: Ronald Reagan signed California's liberalizing law, whereas a restrictive Georgia statute, struck down by the Supreme Court in a companion case to *Roe*, was law when Jimmy Carter was governor. Absent the Court's decision in *Roe v. Wade*, most state legislatures would probably have continued to vote to permit abortion along the lines mandated by *Roe*. By taking the decision out of voters' hands, however, the Supreme Court unintentionally reinforced a notion that women were achieving gains in something less than a legitimate manner.

Yet *Roe* became extremely important to upper-middle-class activists in liberal women's groups and also to fundamentalists in conservative groups—both of whom saw it as the leading symbol of the feminist movement. The result was twofold: After *Roe v. Wade*, abortion was quickly tagged by the press and others as "*the women's issue*," which meant that other issues that, according to polls, actually concerned women more—such as wages and child care—got slighted. And as the sexes tended to drift into separate political parties, those parties adopted the abortion positions of their activist wings. Within a few years it was unthinkable for the Democrats not to support upholding *Roe v. Wade* in their platform, and for the Republicans not to promise to try to overturn it.

As the feminist revolution in the culture and the workplace began to take hold in the 1970s, pollsters began to pick up significant differences between men and women—if not yet in their choice of presidential candidates, then in attitudes on issues in addition to the use of force. Though women had always been somewhat less likely to support insurgent nominees, they were especially wary of the confrontational candidates who were now cropping up, who harked back to something the country hadn't seen in a generation. Two thirds of George Wallace's supporters nationally, for example, were male. There continued to be no significant difference between the sexes in their attitudes on social issues

"THE REPUBLICAN LEADERS, WHO ARE MEN, UNDERSTAND THE MALE VOTE," SAYS THE POLLSTER CELINDA LAKE. "BUT I SENSE THAT A LOT OF DEMOCRATIC MALE LEADERS ARE UNCOMFORTABLE WITH THEIR NEW BASE OF WOMEN."



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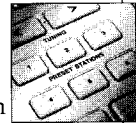
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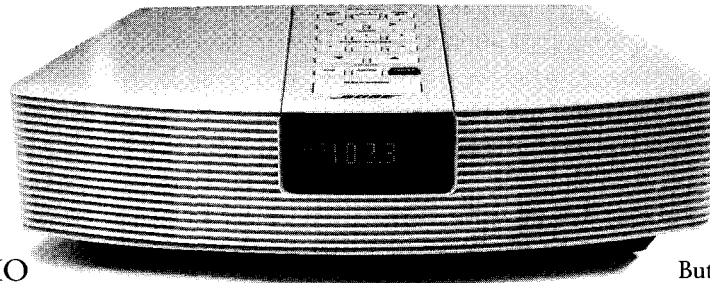
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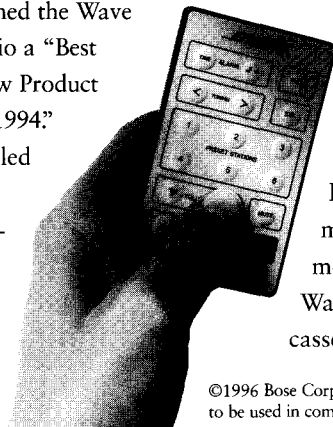
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such as abortion and the Equal Rights Amendment, but analysts in the 1970s found women to be more pessimistic than men about the country's future (though not about their own), and even more risk-averse than before. "For the first time since polling began, you began to see significant differences on the proper role of government, with women favoring such things as full guaranteed employment more than men," says Karlyn Bowman, a resident fellow at the American Enterprise Institute. "And women were now even more likely to avoid risk: differences on the use of force got larger, and in response to questions, women would oppose more strongly than men things such as the location of a nuclear plant in their area."

The Gender Gap Emerges

IN 1980 these and other differences between the sexes began to translate into partisan differences—and for the first time, pollsters systematically began to measure them. That year women favored Jimmy Carter by eight percentage points more than men, according to the *New York Times*/CBS News exit poll: Carter lost 47 percent to 46 percent among women and 55 percent to 38 percent among men. After the election, however, in contrast to prior patterns, women drifted away from the new President while men flocked to him, so that within a year, one poll found, men approved of the incumbent by about 15 percentage points more than women did.

The reason, of course, was Ronald Reagan himself—the first President to talk openly of government as “the enemy” and of dismantling the protections of the modern welfare state that both parties had endorsed almost since women had gotten the vote.

At the same time, certain trends had been crystallizing as a result of the so-called second wave of feminism, which had begun with the promise of making men and women equal. Yet, ironically, the more men and women were accorded equal treatment in the culture, the less they resembled each other politically. By 1980, for the first time, more than half of all women worked outside the home, and pollsters found that those who did work were far more likely to vote differently from men than those who did not. The jobs that women who worked outside the home held were disproportionately in the public sector (where discrimination was less acute), in federal and state bureaucracies that were beginning to raise taxpayers' ire because they were growing far faster than seemed justified. Men and women had once tended to vote as family units, but as divorce rates doubled, from 1965 to 1979, and more women chose to remain single, the family began to splinter.

With divorce and illegitimacy increasing, growing numbers of families came to be headed by women, who tended to be poorer than men similarly situated. In 1978 analysts began

to describe “the feminization of poverty”—a trend that led more women than men to be dependent on and supportive of government welfare programs. As the Democratic Party increasingly became associated with preserving the welfare state from Republican attack, the parties started to take on distinct sexual identities—a trend strengthened by Democratic support in the early 1980s for the women-dominated “nuclear freeze” movement, which was opposed by most Republicans, and by the prominent place the Democratic Party gave to leaders and causes associated with liberal women's groups, including the National Organization for Women.

Men observed the trend too—and it especially affected those who saw themselves as falling even further out of the economic mainstream than women but also as having been abandoned by a “feminized” Democratic Party that had once defined their interests as paramount. By 1980 the country was into a continuing economic cycle that has seen the pay and economic status of men steadily decline in real terms. According to the Labor Department, from 1979 to 1995 the median annual earnings for male workers dropped 11.5 percent, while those for female workers rose by about half that much. Though women's earnings are still only about three quarters of men's, around 60 percent of the new jobs in the 1980s went to women.

Reagan in 1984 and Bush in 1988 carried majorities of women, but the gap also widened in response to the Gulf War—with a majority of women and Democratic members of Congress opposing the Gulf War Resolution and a majority of men and Republican members of Congress supporting it. By the early nineties Christopher Matthews and other political analysts were beginning to outline the ways in which the two parties often mirrored sex stereotypes—with the Democrats being seen as the “Mommy” party (concerned about education and health care), and the Republicans as the “Daddy” party (strong on defense and crime).

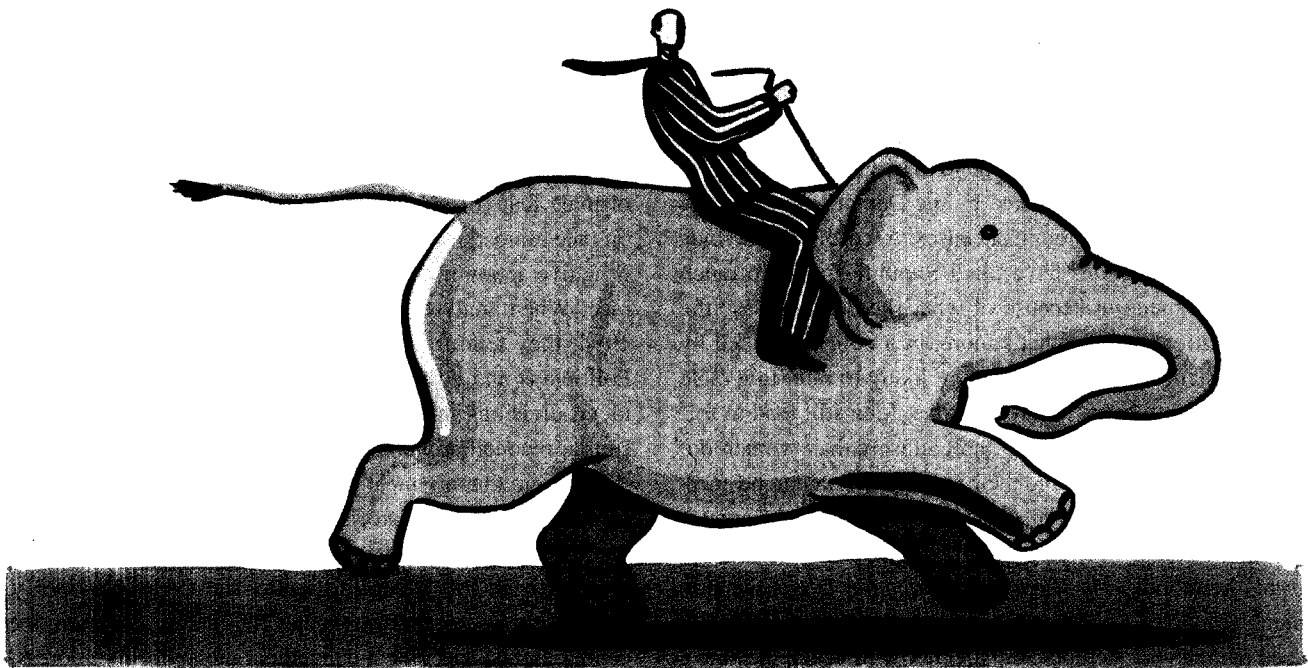
A Party for Daddy

BILL Clinton did only a few points better among women than he did among men. Once he took office, however, he was responsible for widening the gap, as Reagan had been twelve years earlier—only in reverse, as men this time fled the incumbent's camp. In Clinton's case the reaction among men seemed almost visceral. Taken separately, his coffee-klatch managerial style, his propensity to schmooze and gossip, his celebrated indecision, his discomfort with military procedures, and his constant emphasis on diversity and inclusion might seem unremarkable, as might his early decision to make it easier for gays to serve in the military and his insistence that a woman had to be placed in the job of first law-enforcement officer in the country. Taken together, however, these attributes and actions presented a portrait of leadership many men apparently found effeminate.

Hillary Rodham Clinton was also a part of the cause. A joke in Clinton's early months went something like "In the last Administration we used to worry what would happen if Bush became sick and we got Quayle. Now we worry what would happen if Hillary became sick and we got Bill." Polls on Hillary Clinton also showed an enormous and unusual gender gap: women approved 60 percent to 25 percent and men only 40 percent to 37 percent.

In the 1994 congressional elections, which produced a Republican victory, turnout among women was the lowest since 1974. "Democrats would have retained control of both the House and Senate if women had been as excited about the Democrats as men were about the Republicans," Celinda Lake wrote in a memo shortly after the election. She said later, in an interview, "The women who didn't turn out in pro-

the gender gap widened. The gap between the sexes tended to be largest among those under thirty and those with a college education—where some surveys now found it to be 34 points. "The joke we tell around the office is that we don't see how a lot of these young professionals are going to be able to find compatible spouses," Celinda Lake told a reporter. In the early 1996 presidential primaries, when there was still a race, the percentage of females voting in the Republican primaries, according to exit polls, had shrunk to 40–45 percent from its customary 50 percent or slightly higher. And although there is evidence that the gap has been narrowing somewhat in recent months, as both women and men have concluded that the Republican revolution may be going too far, most polling analysts now see it as a standard feature of our politics.



portionate numbers tended to be non-college-educated women. They were very disappointed with the way the health-care effort led by Hillary had failed, and they didn't think the President had done enough to focus on the economy." Andrew Kohut, of the Pew Research Center, suggests that the well-publicized 1994 Paula Jones suit for sexual harassment may also have played a major role in depressing enthusiasm for Clinton among these women.

So, again, a gap predicted to help Democrats had really helped Republicans. "The Republican stars . . . are ushering in a fresh image of masculine government," the conservative columnist Suzanne Fields wrote a month after the election. With the Republicans trying to dismantle a welfare state that many women feel is responsible for securing and protecting their gains of the past two decades, it's no surprise that immediately following the 1994 midterm elections

"The Ambivalent Woman"

HOW will the gender gap affect the 1996 election and our politics thereafter? "The big question in 1996 is how threatened women will feel by what the Republicans are doing," says Andrew Kohut, who has recently released surveys showing the trend toward a gap to be stronger than ever. Celinda Lake says her figures show much the same thing, and argues that the gap's continued presence could help Clinton—if he can get his voters to the polls to the extent that the Republicans got out their vote in 1994. In the special Oregon senatorial election last winter, for example, women favored the Democrat by seven points and men the Republican by 10 points. Yet the Democrat won, because turnout among women was huge—57 percent of the total electorate.

Still, political trends of the past fifteen years suggest that if the electorate continues to divide increasingly along sex lines, it will help the Republicans. Although polls so far show that the gap does appear to be aiding the Democrats this year, that may be a one-election reaction to Bob Dole's age (and his lack of appeal to some men) and to the way Republicans have frightened voters with their threats of Medicare cuts. More important, the whole political debate has now shifted so far to the right—with both presidential candidates endorsing balanced budgets and substantial cuts in the welfare state—that no matter who gets elected in November, the agenda of the “Daddy” party is going to prevail. That's why Everett C. Ladd, of the Roper Center, can say, “In truth, women are not really more Democratic than they were fifteen years ago. It's that men have become more Republican.” And so, therefore, has the country.

The press often describes this as a “backlash,” but it's more complicated than that. In a universe where one party is identified with men and the other with women, most men see something of themselves in the male party. But many women—principally homemakers and the traditionally religious—are still unlikely to respond to a female party, at least as that party has been defined by the Democratic left or by media sympathetic to feminist causes. According to Celinda Lake, recent elections have tilted Republican not so much because of men but because of what she describes as “the ambivalent woman.” What's more, in a politics defined by gender identification men are more likely to rally to a male standard than women to a female one. Men still tend to follow conventional politics far more closely than women do; they are more likely to find their identity in it and to be energized by it. That's especially true when they feel they are unfairly under siege. As Todd Gitlin writes in another context in his new book, *The Twilight of Common Dreams*, many men demonized as conservative white males will ironically seek out the very stereotypical identity with which they have been tagged.

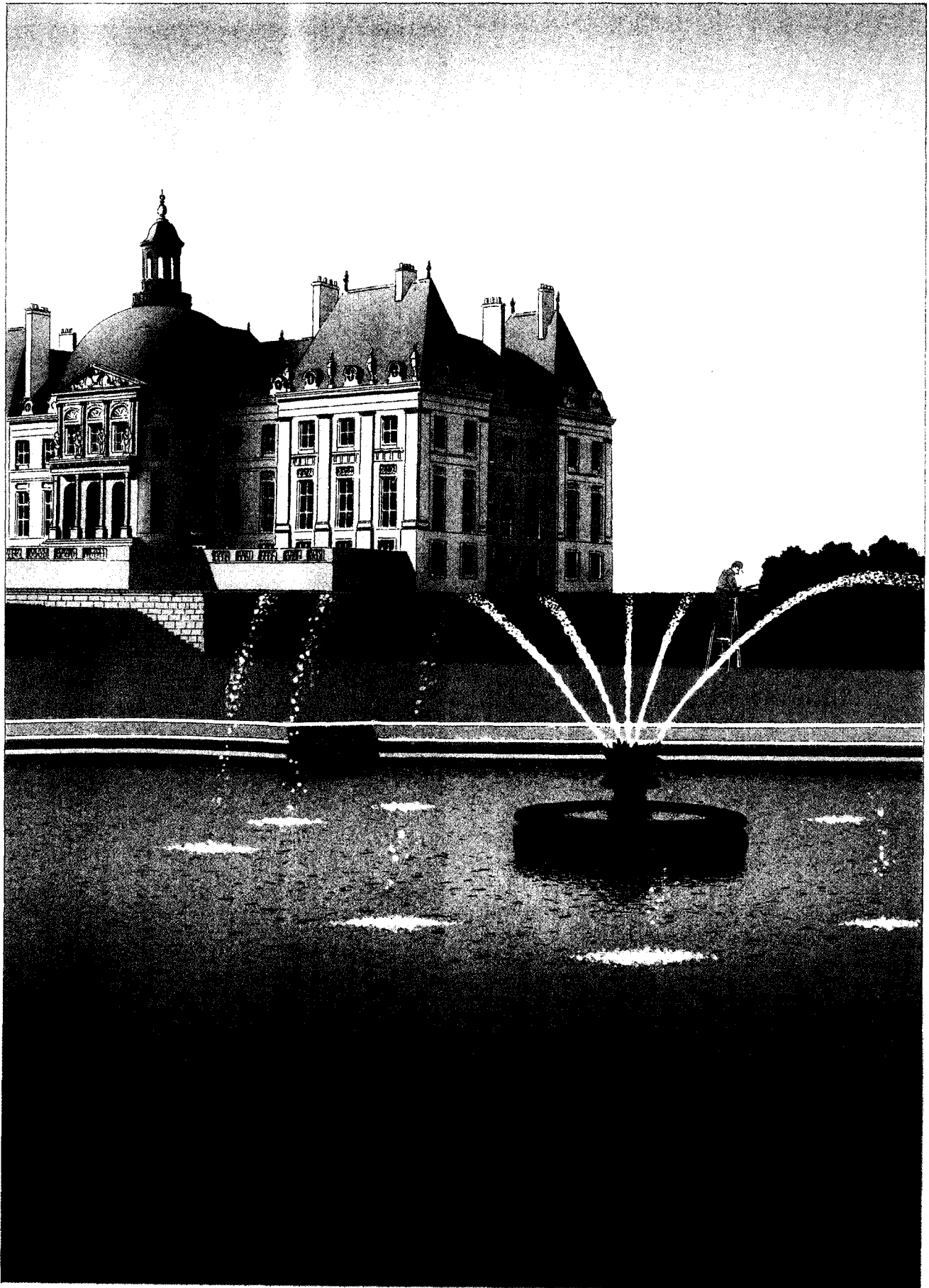
Some strategists say that part of the problem is that the male leadership of the Democratic Party is having trouble meshing with its new constituency. “The Republican leaders, who are men, understand the male vote,” Lake says. “But I sense that a lot of Democratic male leaders are uncomfortable with their new base of women.” That may be why the Democratic Party is having trouble finding its voice in this new era and why so many of its old leaders, such as Sam Nunn and Bill Bradley, are leaving politics. In fact, Paula Baker, an associate professor of history at the University of Pittsburgh and the author of several articles on sex and politics, sees the general disenchantment with the Democratic Party—and, indeed, with politics and government altogether—as a direct result of sex-based shifts. “There's a trend in American history that when women enter a particular activity or profession, men then often think less of that

domain,” Baker says. “When anything becomes feminized, the pay diminishes, the stratification in the work increases, and the status diminishes.”

The Individual and the Community

THE importance of the gender gap can be misinterpreted—as the media have frequently demonstrated over the past fifteen years. Moreover, while the voting gaps that once divided us over religion and class have become less important, other gaps—such as those defined by race and education—reveal larger fault lines in the electorate than does the gender gap.

In American politics, however, where most battles tend to be fought in the cautious middle, a shift of only 10 percent of the electorate can cause a realignment. In the wake of the O. J. Simpson verdict and the Million Man March on Washington last year many commentators called for a more open public discussion of our racial problems. Yet with all its complications, race gets discussed far more openly and, often, intelligently in politics than does the new role of women or male fears of displacement. The welfare debate focuses on race almost to the exclusion of sex. In discussions of affirmative action in the media the focus is almost always on race. When analysts talk about the “white male revolt” of 1994, they tend to focus on the “white,” not the “male.” Politicians and editorialists call every day for healing the racial divisions in the culture, but no one ever calls for a similar reconciliation on gender issues. “This is the elephant in the room that no one's willing to acknowledge,” says the social and cultural historian Elaine Tyler May. “Because men and women live together in the same families, people are conflicted. It's a very difficult issue to discuss openly, because the intimacy complicates the matter.” In truth, the gender gap has become a convenient metaphor for addressing an issue that has always troubled Americans—finding a workable balance between the cherished values of libertarianism on the one hand and communitarianism on the other. It should probably not surprise us that in a troubled and confused age we have somehow managed to combine these two preoccupations into one abiding, if rarely articulated, fixation that now permeates and defines our politics. And in the end it is inevitable that changes as momentous as the ones sparked by the women's movement will produce dislocations. Traditional notions of what it means to be a man or a woman have been woven into our notions of what a government ought to provide. As a British writer, Julie Burchill, once said, “Only America could have started the men's movement in a country which had not passed the Equal Rights Amendment, nor given women the right to terminate their pregnancies while giving men every right to abandon pregnant women.” ☸



Spring

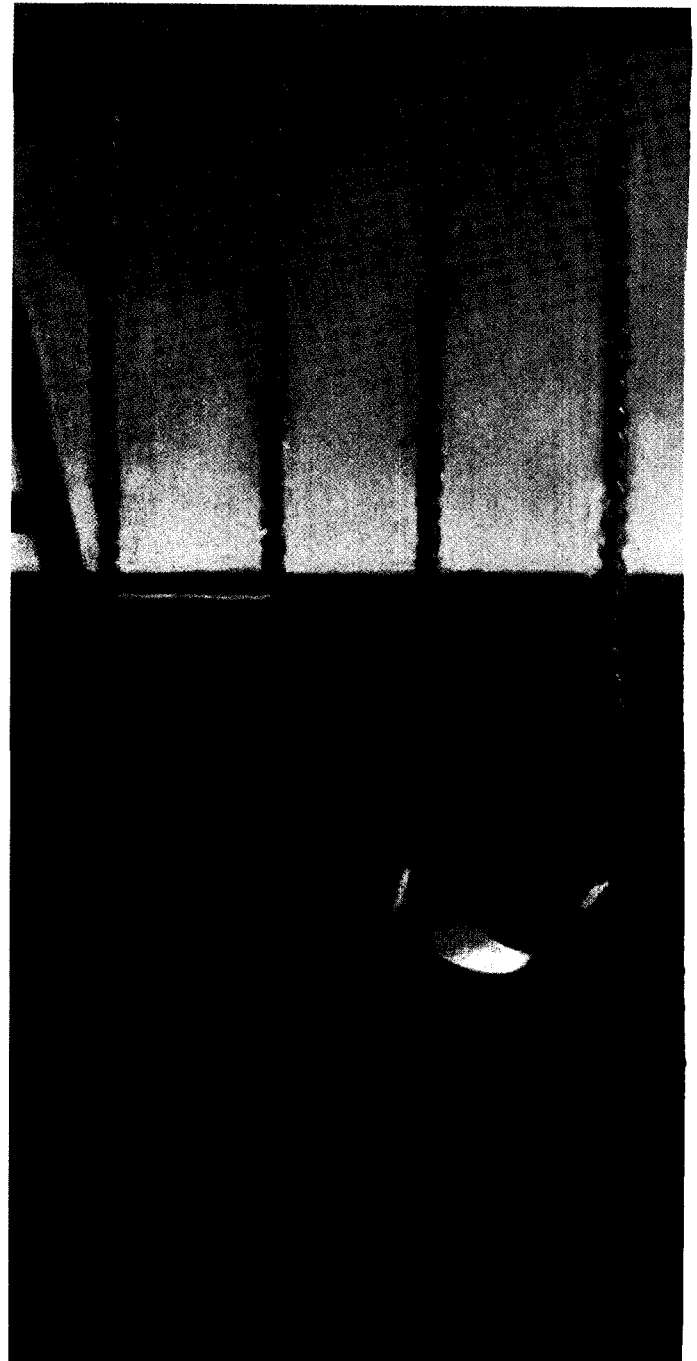
by MARK WALTERS

“Yes,” he said,
a bit too loudly,
“I’m uncomfortable with
the idea that children
should be forced to negotiate
the rituals and prohibitions
of sexuality, to enter
into the sexual politics
of adults”

I ANNAH has an imaginary playmate. His name is Ryan Ray. I am first made aware of him one Sunday afternoon as I prepare to mow the lawn. I gird up my loins for it—snap into place my allergy mask, pull my ball cap down low and tight on my head, hoist and hitch up my gym shorts and argyle socks. As I do this—brace myself—Hannah bursts out the back door and shouts at the swing set, “Ryan Ray! You get off that right now!” and then stands with her fists on her hips, her jaw pushed forward, glaring at a swing that as near as I can tell is empty, dangling and swaying loosely in the light wind.

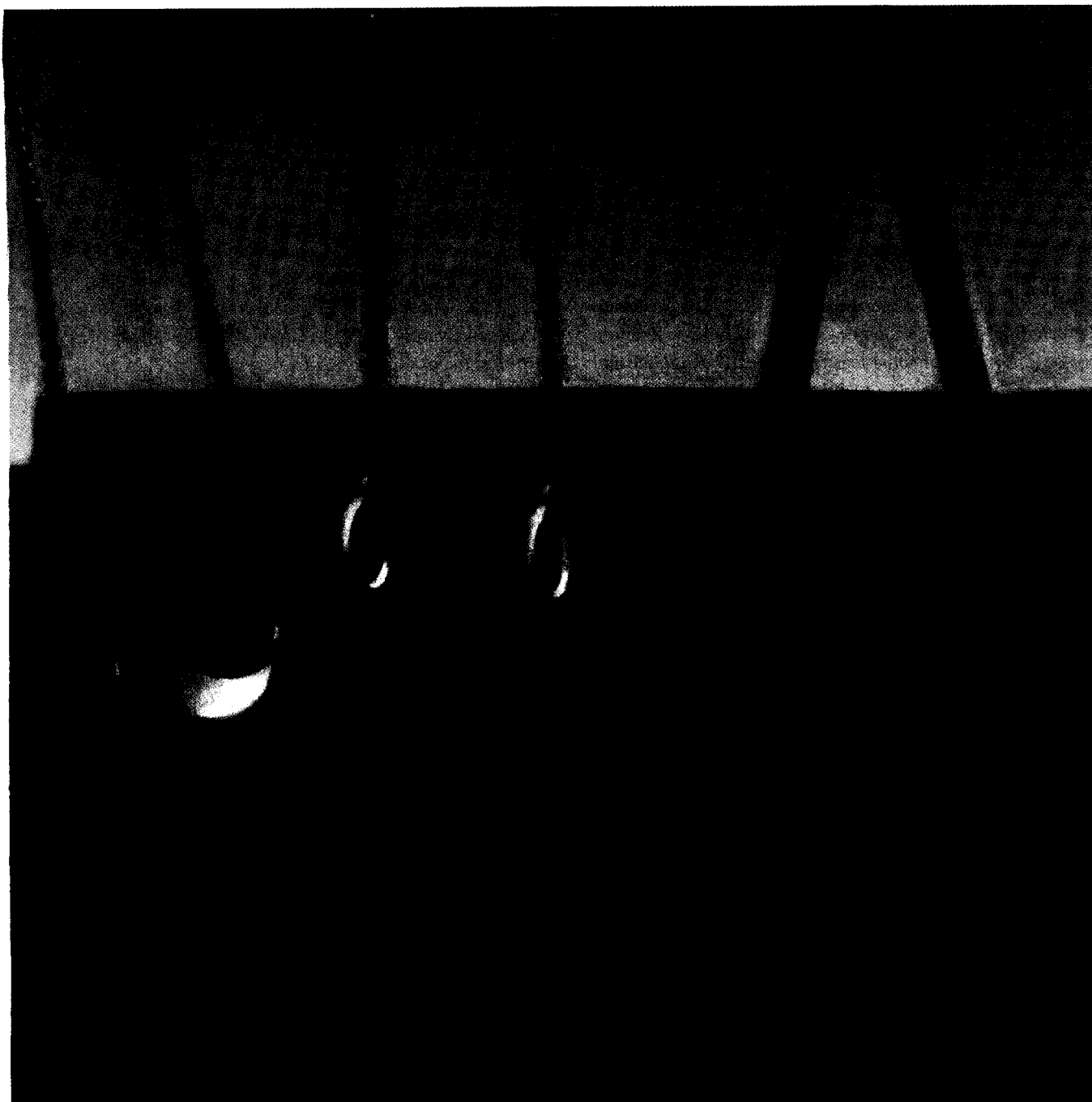
I feel something cold arc through my chest, and believe for an instant that my daughter has lost her mind. “Hannah!” I shout—a familiar voice, a line with which to pull her back to this world. “Hannah! What are you doing?”

She turns to face me and raises her hands, pink palms forward, signaling that all is well. “It’s okay, Daddy,” she says. “He’s off.” And then she smiles sweetly, takes two rabbit hops forward and one back, and runs into the house again.



I start the mower and lurch across the lawn, my face tucked in to avoid the dust, my upper body vibrating as if I had hold of a jackhammer, and I see Hannah as she was, standing on the patio and shouting at air. Surely Greta’s family is to blame for this—that collection of crackpots and loons, their strangely coded DNA seeping into the gene pool, manifesting itself in the fifth year of our daughter, prompting her to see rascals on empty swings.

We once went to a dinner party given by an acquaintance at the small Missouri college where I teach literature. The invitation came from a gaunt, hook-nosed man in the biolo-



gy department, whose office was across from mine and whom I could hear breathing noisily throughout the day as he labored over his lecture notes. "Shoe!" he had shouted one Friday afternoon, from out of the blue, from across the hall, not bothering even to rise from his desk or show his face. "You and the missus come to our house tomorrow at seven." And so we did; and there we met a woman who was terrified of creating strange children.

She sat at one end of the table, next to her fidgeting husband, and confessed to us, complete strangers, and to three other couples of varying familiarity, that she feared pregnan-

cy. "Really," she said, leaning forward, enlarging her eyes as if startled at the revelation, "how do you know that the kid isn't going to grow up to be an ax murderer or something? I mean, what guarantees are there?"

After chuckling in what Greta later told me was an unbelievably condescending manner, I began to explain the predicament of Raskolnikov, but abandoned the allusion after noticing the dull faces of my dinner companions and the hot glare of my wife. "I don't know," I said finally. "I suppose there aren't any guarantees. It's not as if they're returnable."

The woman smacked her lips tartly and shook her head. "You don't understand," she said. "How can you be sure that some crazy trait from somewhere in your family won't be passed along to your child?"

The table, of course, fell silent, everyone surely trying to imagine what sort of lunatics lurked in this couple's past. The husband reddened and lifted his eyes from his plate only once, briefly—an anxious, moist glance at the rest of us, an act of such self-consciousness that I blushed and looked away.

I wrestle the lawn mower around the posts of the swing set, trying to circle tightly and cut my weed-whip time. Clumps of grass trail from the mower's filled bag, beneath the dangling swings, upon one of which may be a phantom boy scooping his gossamer legs to his chest, cursing me and my commotion, waiting to lead my daughter to other worlds.

I release the throttle and the mower bucks to a stop. My eyes are beginning to itch, and I feel a thin scratching at the back of my throat. The wind picks up, pressing its bullying heat upon me as I tilt the bag into a recyclable sack, swirling the cut grass and dust until I have to step away, lift my mask, and sneeze violently. I turn to see Hannah, her face bobbing like a pale balloon behind the porch glass, laughing uproariously. A lover of physical comedy, she has given up Barney for Chaplin and the Three Stooges; she delights in gouged eyes and pratfalls.

This past autumn she went trick-or-treating dressed as the Little Tramp, in a baggy black suit, an undersized bowler, and a twitchy moustache. She waddled, feet splayed, cane twirling, along the sidewalks in our neighborhood, thwarting monsters with comic violence. At one treacherous corner, from behind a dark elm a boy in a hockey mask leaped, waving a rubber ax and contorting his body grotesquely, threateningly. Before I could step between them to protect her, Hannah cracked him across the head with her cane, whereupon he dropped his ax and ran jaggedly for home.

"Why do you let her watch that stuff?" Greta asked later, as we sat in the living room reading the newspaper. Hannah was in bed, still trembling, no doubt, from bite-size Baby Ruths and Gummy Bears—the sugary spoils of conflict.

"What do you mean?" I said. "Chaplin was a genius. She's just cultivating a taste for classic physical comedy."

"It seems to me that she's cultivating a taste for violence."

"Are you kidding me?" I leaned forward and rustled and snapped the sports section in a display of pique. "Would you rather she had shrieked and fainted? You're the last person I dreamed would buy into that horror-film cliché, that brand of misogyny."

Greta rolled her eyes. "This wasn't a B-movie scene, Joe. This was real life, and she actually struck a kid over the head. And I tell you what: I'm going to be angry if either you or she laughed about it."

"Of course we didn't," I said, snorting resentfully, but I

felt a damp tangle of uncertainty in my chest. Had I actually guffawed as Hannah smacked her cane across the boy's startled head? Had we, father and daughter, then stood snickering in the moonlight as he reeled up the street toward home? "Of course not," I said. "But even if we had, I'm not sure I'd apologize for it. Our culture has made female victimization the stuff of comedy for years. I'd think you would appreciate women's appropriation of aggressive humor—it's Thelma and Louise, *La Femme Nikita*."

"Great role models," Greta said. "Lovely women."

But I could see that the conversation had taken an odd turn, had progressed in such a way that Greta now found herself on the opposite end of the court from where she usually played, awkwardly having to question the subversion of gender roles, the physical assertion of women.

"Hannah's four years old," I said. "How was she to know that ax wasn't real? I'd think any reflex of self-defense should be encouraged."

"That's such crap, Joe," Greta said, standing now, attempting, I imagined, to gain authority. "Just last week you were arguing that urban violence"—and here she lowered her voice, set her jaw forward, spoke in a nasal, pompous tone that was meant to parody mine—"—*'codes of reciprocal violence,'* could be broken only if someone had the perspective to walk away, to not respond. Now you're saying that we should encourage our daughter to bash heads?"

"Of course not," I said, now standing too, secretly pleased that Greta had actually been paying attention to my spiel the week before. "But *offing* someone for scuffing your Nikes is different from defending yourself from physical attack."

"But she wasn't being attacked! This is Halloween! The neighborhood is filled with costumed kids trying to be scary."

"Aha!" I shouted, and Greta shushed me and glared and pointed at the ceiling, to Hannah's upstairs bedroom. I ducked my head, a gesture of contrition, and repeated, softly, "Aha. Just a minute ago you were saying that this was 'real life,' not a B-movie scene."

"Exactly," Greta said. "And so Hannah needs to be able to distinguish between an actual and an imagined threat, because her hitting someone over the head has real consequences—that's real life."

For an instant I felt muddled, confused, in danger of losing the point before this subtle equivocation. "Well," I said cautiously, "that's asking a lot from a four-year-old. We don't even expect that sort of discrimination from cops confronted by toy guns."

"Well, maybe we should," she said, and turned and walked toward the kitchen.

I stood there gnashing my teeth, feeling cheated. Greta should have been pleased that Hannah had taken a cane to a monster's head. This, after all, was the same woman who, upon hearing that an Ecuadorian hairdresser had lopped off

the penis of her abusive husband, simply raised her eyebrows and nodded.

One of my students once told me that the older his parents grew, the more like themselves they became, and I thought at the time that that was as precise an observation on aging as I had come across: eventually we become caricatures of ourselves—our ears and noses enlarging, our fears and biases assuming grotesque, exaggerated proportions, our quirks becoming habitual, predictable, farcical. But Greta was moving in the opposite direction, becoming less like herself, and I was still stumbling after her, trying to figure out just who she was.

I once lay in bed and watched her as she slept, her mouth slack and pale on the pillow; her eyelids blue-veined, translucent, puffy from slumber; an astonishing growth of blonde down on her cheek and jawline. I marveled at the idea that she was mine, my woman, my wife, the mother of my child, that we lived together but that essentially I didn't know her—I had just come upon her, a stranger, and had taken her home, so to speak, and here she was in my bed, alive and inscrutable. I felt a vague sense of the kind of terror one might feel if he were suddenly to discover that he had been living for years with an undomesticated and dangerous animal.

I HAUL the sack of grass clippings around the side of the garage and return to the mower. Hannah has vanished from the porch window into the depths of the house, taking Ryan Ray with her, perhaps, or, I hope, leaving him outside to fend for himself. I start the mower and watch it expel a cloud of dust and white smoke, and I begin fighting it up a steep incline toward the back fence. I smell my own breath, stale, heavy, coming in wheezing drafts beneath my mask; taste blood on my teeth; feel chapped lips.

As I wheel the mower around and begin my descent from the hill, I see Greta standing on the patio, waving. She has a bit of a scowl on her face, and I feel a sudden wash of anxiety. I try to recall if I've committed a crime recently. I am struck by the audacity of men who keep mistresses or steal inheritances and continue living with their wives, unaffected, going through the motions of marriage as if blameless. I kill the engine and walk toward her, pulling down my mask and pushing back my ball cap.

Greta invites me to sit on one of the patio chairs. She drags and scrapes hers over to me, so that when she sits, our knees are touching.

"I've just had a conversation with Hannah," she says.

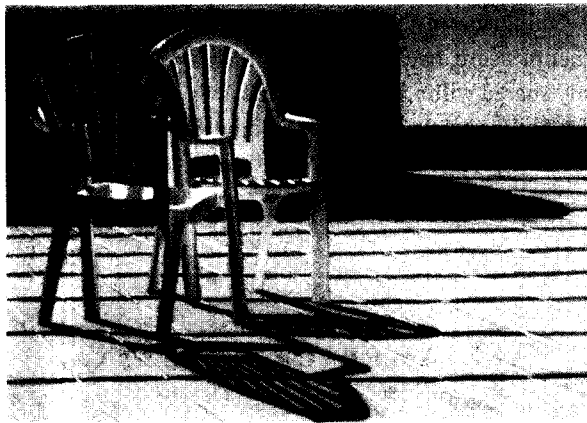
"A boy in her preschool class wants, she says, to 'sax' her."

For an odd instant I think of Bill Clinton, in coat and tie and sunglasses, blowing the saxophone on the Arsenio Hall show. "What?" I ask, though I know exactly where she's going with this.

"There's this boy, Freddie McGuirk, and he's been trying to hug Hannah on the playground. During nap time he'll reach over and touch her and say that he wants to 'sax' her."

"Where does he touch her?" I ask, leaning forward.

Greta nods. "Just on the arm. But she's pretty upset by it. She wanted to know what 'sax' means."



I feel a clutching at my heart. I want to hunt down this Freddie McGuirk and his father, who, I imagine, is a fat, beer-drunk auto worker. He'll wobble to his front door wearing a T-shirt that rides up on his white gut, holding a can of Old Milwaukee in his greasy hand, and Freddie will be standing behind him, peering up at me with his filthy street urchin's face. "Are you Mr. McGuirk?"

I'll ask, clenching my teeth, balling my fist at my side. And in the instant he nods, I'll club him with a left hook. As he crumples, I'll lift Freddie by the throat and say, "Look, you little son of a bitch, if you ever touch or speak to my daughter again, I'll break your stinking little neck."

"I've made an appointment to see Rachel tomorrow afternoon at four," Greta says. Rachel is the director of the preschool, a tall blonde woman in on whom I once walked as she sat on the toilet—her blue panties coiled about her knees, her legs long and remarkably tan—while I was wandering the hallways, looking at crayon drawings and waiting for Hannah to find her backpack. "Oh, God, I'm sorry," I cried, slamming the door shut and standing on the other side, weak with surprise. "That's okay," she shouted. "We take the locks off all the doors, though we try to teach the children to knock before they open one." "Of course," I said, and crept away, crouching a bit beneath the weight of her rebuke.

"Can you be there?" Greta asks.

"Of course," I say.

"Good. Rachel's going to invite the McGuirks, too. We need to take care of this."

We sit there, our knees touching, looking at each other. "What did you tell Hannah?"

Greta sighs. "I tried to distinguish good touching from bad touching," she says, narrowing her eyes in recollection. "I asked her how she felt when her friend Mason hugged her, and she said 'Happy,' and how she felt when Freddie McGuirk hugged her, and she said 'Yucky.' I told her that

she never had to let anyone hug her or touch her who made her feel that way, yucky; that her body was hers and that certain parts of her body”—and here Greta, with childlike intensity, points to her own—“like her breasts and her genitals, are especially private.”

She sighs again and shifts around in her chair. “And then I thought, Oh, Christ, I’m going to make her afraid of the doctor or ultimately frigid or something, so I told her that sometimes she might have to be touched there—by Dr. Marks, for instance—to see if she’s healthy and all, but that she should always tell us if *anyone* touches her and makes her feel funny or uncomfortable. I told her that someday, when she’s *much, much* older, she might be in love and want someone to touch her to give her pleasure, because the body is a wonderful thing, but is only shared willingly, with permission. And that is what sex is, but the yucky feeling isn’t sex at all—it’s violence or meanness or something.” Greta reaches up and covers her face with her hands. “Oh,

God. I don’t know what I said. I’ve probably screwed her up for life.”

I touch her shoulder. “No, hey, no,” I say. “That was perfect. It was great, really.”

Greta drops her hands and stands abruptly. “I’m going inside. You can finish mowing.” And she turns, pushes and scrapes her chair back into place, and walks to the patio door.

“Hey, Greta,” I call, and she turns to face me. I hesitate, wanting to say the right thing. “You know, she’s lucky to have a mother like you.” For an instant Greta’s eyes seem to blur, and then she gives me the finger and tells me, not unkindly, to get back to work.

While I’m mowing again, stumbling back and forth across the lawn, I recall that just a few months earlier Hannah came home from preschool smelling of the outdoors, of playground dust and wind, flushed and jumpy with excitement because they were learning “Spanish” in her class. She

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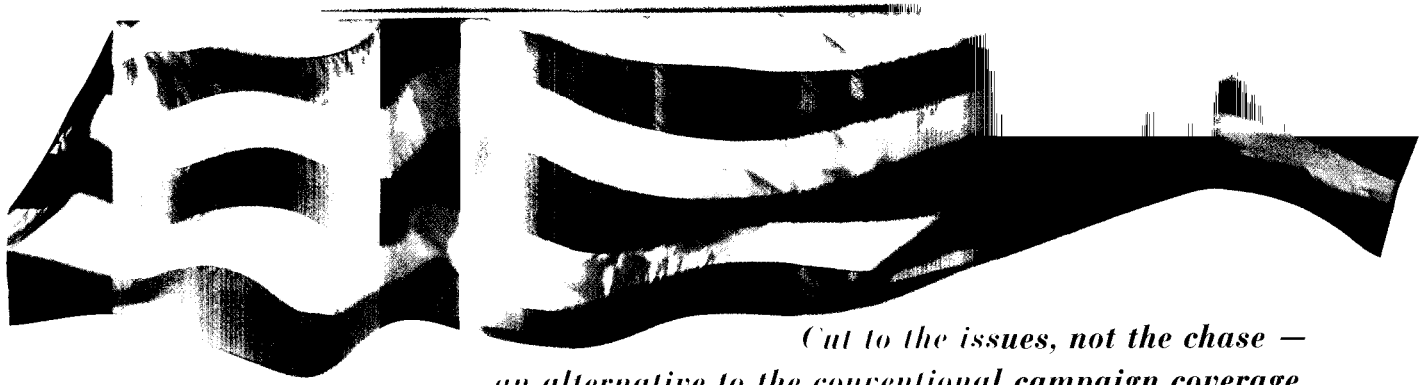
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demonstrated—held her hands carefully before her chest and manipulated her fingers—and I laughed and said, “Signing. You’re learning to sign.” And she looked at me as if I might be trying to confuse her, and cautiously nodded her head and said, “Uh-huh,” and continued working her fingers, an expression of deliberate modesty on her face. I think about this and find myself breathing quickly, shallowly. I have to stop the mower and stand there, absurdly, in the middle of our tidy back yard, panting as if I were about to die.

THAT evening, after her bath, Hannah comes into my study to say good-night. She is wearing a yellow cotton nightie with blue-bowed teddy bears on it, and she stands before me, her cheeks scrubbed and pink and her damp hair combed back. She reaches up to me and I kiss her—a short, loving smack. I hold her tightly, breathe her soapy scent, feel her ribs beneath my hands. She is growing taller, leaner, her body lengthening from toddler squatness. I slide my hand along her sloping back and begin to pat her bottom and find myself hesitating, considering for a confused instant how she might interpret my touch. Then I grow flushed with sudden anger and shame that I would even be thinking this, scrutinizing gestures of affection. She rescues me, returns me to innocence, by tugging me closer, pressing her mouth to my whiskery cheek and chanting, “Good night, Daddy-bo-batty,” inviting me to respond, “Good night, Hannah-banana”—the liturgy of nonsense love, of untethered hearts.

That night I rise from bed three times to make my way to the kitchen, where I sloppily drink cold tap water, trying to quench a thirst that hangs stubbornly in the back of my throat. Each time, as I retreat, I am momentarily touched by an odd, dreamy sense of well-being, as if I had been returned to childhood and, creeping the darkened hall from the bathroom, could hear my father’s rhythmic snores in the distance. I recall the limey scent of his skin, his hairy, muscled arms lax against the sheets, his body curved toward my mother—a stay against night terrors. I feel this each time and then am struck with the realization that he does not live here, that I am the father, the protector. I am vaguely frightened as I crawl into bed again, lie on my back and feel my weight sagging into the mattress, recollect my graying temples, my aging body, within which on such nights I attempt to still the panicked rushing of my childish blood.

MONDAY afternoon I leave campus early and drive to La Petite Academy. In the fenced playground a loose throng of shouting boys rushes about madly, changes direction suddenly, instinctively, like a school of fish or a herd of wildebeests. Small clusters of girls busily attend to other matters, scooping sand into buckets and bowls, speaking urgently to one another in cartoon-mouse voices. Drifting among these children are two giants: Mathilda, a

middle-aged woman with freckled arms and prodigious, matriarchal breasts; and Jennifer, an athletic college girl with a dark ponytail and sunglasses, who, it is rumored, while spending the previous summer as a nanny in New England allowed the children’s gray-haired father into her borrowed bed on a regular, comfortable basis.

“Hi, Professor Shoe!” she calls, waving and walking toward me. Behind her I see Hannah’s blonde head rise suddenly from a pack of playmates and search the air for my presence, a cub sniffing the wind. When she sees me, she shouts “Daddy!” and charges past Jennifer to meet me at the gate. After a cheerful collision she abruptly turns serious.

“Come see what we found,” she says, her lower lip thrust forward dolefully.

But Jennifer is before us now, and so I stand. “I will, sweetheart. Just a minute.”

“Hi,” Jennifer says, adjusting her sunglasses, crinkling her nose. “How are you doing?”

“Just fine, thanks, Jennifer. How are you?”

“Fine,” she says, nodding. A hot-pink fever blister is budding on the corner of her mouth. “Just fine.”

Hannah is following the exchange, holding my hand, her face tipped upward and one eye squinting into the sun.

“The kids found a dead bird,” Jennifer says. “They’re going to give it a funeral. Right, Hannah?”

Hannah nods.

“Really?” I say, but I am watching the rushing boys, particularly one who seems to be the leader. He is scuffed and aggressive, wears a red crewcut, and bullies the other boys with his elbows. “Who’s that?” I ask casually. I imagine him at nap time, running his scaly hand up my daughter’s leg. “The one with the red hair and the Ninja Turtle T-shirt.”

“Perry Gee,” Jennifer says.

My heart dips in disappointment, but I continue asking names until ultimately, because I’m having no luck and the game is growing tiresome, I ask which boy is Ryan Ray.

At this Jennifer peers over the top of her sunglasses at the children, frowning, repeating the name silently, and Hannah relaxes her hold on my hand. She looks at the children too, but vaguely, nibbling on her lower lip. Then I realize my mistake, and I scoop Hannah up into my arms, holding her as if she might be snatched from me on the heels of this betrayal.

“Sorry. Never mind,” I say. “I was thinking of a boy in our neighborhood.”

Jennifer nods and licks her fever blister distractedly. Hannah leans into me and whispers in my ear, “Come see what we found.” And I go happily, as light as the newly forgiven.

At four o’clock Greta arrives, stern and striking in her black business suit, and she and I walk to the main building. Its cavernous interior is cool and smells of construction paper and paste. We click along the hallway to Rachel’s office,

my stomach doing slow revolutions and feeding a thickness in my throat. Rachel meets us at the door and invites us in. A rumpled-looking couple is already present, sitting on a vinyl couch and whispering conspiratorially.

"Joe and Greta Shoe, this is Gene and Linda McGuirk," Rachel announces, gesturing gracefully, first to us and then to the McGuirks, who rise hurriedly, knocking into each other, bobbing their heads and smiling and extending their hands. He is a short, ruddy, walleyed man with an unfortunate moustache and a pinkie ring. For an instant I am bolstered by the thought that if it came to it, I could beat him in a fistfight. She is taller than he by half a foot, but thin and pale and trying self-consciously to smile without revealing a pair of coffee-stained buck teeth.

"Hi, nice to meet you," we say to each other, everyone shaking hands clumsily. I resist the urge to turn at last to Greta and shake her hand too, do a shtick, vent the fear and violence in my heart.

"Please, everyone, have a seat," Rachel says. She will be the moderator, the voice of reason.

I sit in a fat upholstered chair whose seat cushion collapses at the rear, so that I am pinched, knees high, childish in the company of adults. While Rachel speaks, I stealthily wrestle my way forward until I'm on the chair's edge, magically dignified again.

"Now, we're here today because we're all concerned about some interaction taking place between Hannah and Freddie."

The McGuirks nod emphatically, ready to confess sin. Greta sits with her chin propped elegantly in her hand, staring at Rachel, unblinking.

"As you all know," Rachel continues, "Freddie has apparently been touching Hannah and making inappropriate suggestions about sex."

As Rachel says this, I not only re-experience my initial outrage but also—oddly, deplorably—feel a sudden interest in her legs, which are slender and dark, touching at the knees and sloping smoothly to her crossed ankles.

"I know that Joe and Greta have talked with Hannah about this and explained, though probably earlier than they would have liked"—she pauses to smile sympathetically at us—"what sex is and what constitutes its proper boundaries." She shifts her attention to the McGuirks and leans forward; the hem of her skirt rides provocatively up her thigh. "But I don't know if Gene and Linda have had a chance to speak to Freddie yet."

The McGuirks appear surprised, as if they had been caught napping, and then they both begin speaking at once, he nervously fingering his sparse moustache and she holding her hand protectively before her mouth.

"I got home late last night, so Fred was asleep when I got home," he mumbles.

"It's his brother," she moans. "He tells him things a little boy shouldn't know."

"And then of course I had to leave the house early this morning."

"He shows him nasty pictures. I know he does."

Rachel is listening attentively, her dark, thin-plucked brows knit. Beneath her blonde hair are the roots of a brunette. I replay the bathroom scene from the year before, seeing her perched on the toilet, facing me, her sandaled feet pigeon-toed, her knees bound by blue panties, those long legs naked and brown. Had I seen a pale bikini line? A tufted shadow? My pulse trips and quickens at the prospect,

but then slows as I recall her dress heaped modestly on her lap, my own quick and remorseful exit. *Oh, God, I'm sorry.*

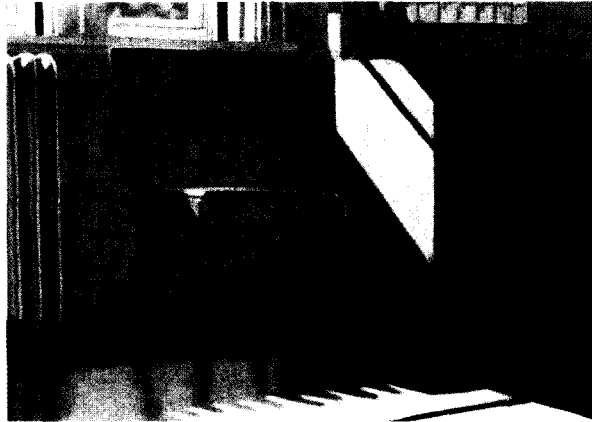
"But, boy, I'm going to talk to him tonight!" Mr. McGuirk declares, banging his plump fist on one knee. Mrs. McGuirk stretches her lip over her teeth and nods in agreement.

I am horrified by my inability to concentrate on this matter. I recall that two nights before, while watching on CNN a weeping victim of natural disaster, a Missouri farm wife who had lost her home and hundreds of acres to spring floods, I realized I was only admiring the tangled sweep of her hair, the sensual arc of her trembling lip. I fled to my study, to my books, seeking redemption, trusting that reading would check my lust, bring me closer to God.

Greta folds her hands beneath her chin, extending the index fingers and touching them at their tips. "I just think it's unfortunate that children can't be children longer than this," she says. "Not that they shouldn't be aware of their bodies and sexual difference and even desire, but that they should have to begin thinking and worrying about aggression at this age—how to cope with it. I just think it's unfortunate." And then, as an afterthought, "God knows, once you enter that world, you're in it the rest of your life."

The ambiguity of this remark, its confessional tone, startles me. While Rachel and Linda McGuirk nod empathetically, I imagine that Gene and I are crouching outside their circle, hulking, rapacious, mouth-breathing and hairy-backed.

"Yes," I announce a bit too loudly, "I'm uncomfortable



too with the idea that children should be forced to negotiate the rituals and prohibitions of sexuality, to enter into the sexual politics of adults."

Everyone looks at me dumbly except Greta, who is concentrating on a loose thread in the hem of her skirt, smoothing it meticulously with her finger. I suddenly feel ludicrous and hot.

Eventually, when we have all agreed that Freddie will be spoken to, that we are reasonable people and can teach our children to behave properly, we stand and shake hands again. Greta and I follow the McGuirks to the door, taking our time, hanging back, so that we won't have to make small talk with them in the corridor.

In the parking lot we see them walking with a thin, blond-haired boy with owlsh glasses and enormous pink ears. "That's Freddie?" I ask. This child, I recall, was not part of that stampeding herd of boys; rather, he sat by himself on a swing, twisting and spiraling slowly, dragging his heels in the sand, staring contemplatively at the sky.

"Evidently," Greta says. She seems tired, or sad.

"Hey, are you okay?" I take her elbow, slowing our pace.

"Uh-huh." She looks at me and smiles, and I feel lightened by this act of generosity, pleased that I have not somehow disappointed her.

I watch the McGuirks approach their car—a white Ford Escort that's missing a hubcap. I watch as Gene secures Freddie in the back seat, jauntily rounds the trunk to the passenger's side and opens the door for Linda, places his hand gently on the small of her sweat-dampened back, closes the door firmly. Seamus Heaney once wrote about such gestures, the banalities of affection and care, "Here is love like a tin-smith's scoop sunk past its gleam in the meal-bin," and I think of this as Gene returns to the driver's side, trying to conceal a bit of a limp, his trousers too short, his shoes scuffed and thinning at the soles.

THAT night Hannah calls Greta from our bed to hers. "Mom," she cries, her voice small and fragile in the darkness. "Mom."

I wait a few minutes, my feelings hurt, and then follow to her bedroom and stand quietly outside the door. I am old and goatish in my boxers. I am growing hair in improbable places.

I see Greta's silhouette on the edge of Hannah's bed; she is speaking quietly, stroking Hannah's hair.

"Mom, are you going to die?" Hannah asks.

The suddenness of this question shocks me, dislodging something. I want to step into the room, turn on the light, and say, "No, of course not. Go to sleep now." But in the concentrated stillness I hear Greta say yes, she will die someday—that people die, and because she is older than Hannah, she will probably die first.

Just like that.

Then there is quiet again, a broad, dark space within which they are surely watching each other, carefully, seriously, Greta stroking Hannah's hair, their hearts beating slowly, making necessary adjustments.

"I'm really going to miss you," Hannah says finally. The declaration is so clear that I lose my breath before it and must turn and make my way weakly back to bed.

When Greta returns, she tiptoes past me—her ankles cracking, the floorboards creaking—to our bathroom, closes the door, and turns on the light. From the bed I hear water rushing in the sink, and behind it what sounds like the muted gasps of someone struggling for air.

FRIDAY night at dinner Hannah announces the demise of Ryan Ray. We are eating fried chicken and she is swaying side to side, as if to music, holding a drumstick delicately with both hands.

"What happened?" I ask.

She licks her shiny upper lip. "A piano fell on his noggin," she says, and then stretches her arm upward and lets her hand fall to her head. "Bonk!" she cries.

Greta and I look at each other. "Yikes," we say together. Greta kicks me under the table. "Owe me a Coke."

Synchronic utterances, I think, bode well, suggesting sturdy symmetry, the binding of lives.

In the fourth year of our marriage my sister Susan came to visit for a weekend, and after a night of barhopping we returned jovially to our apartment, where Greta scooped the startled Molly, our cat, into her arms, cradling and stroking her until she ceased her nettled mews, closed her eyes, and rumbled and purred with pleasure. I sat beside them, my arm around Greta's shoulders, my free hand pressing Molly's paw, which clenched and unclenched with voluptuous rhythm, exposing and retracting dangerous curving claws.

Susan stood teetering before us, smiling mawkishly. "You two are going to make such good parents," she moaned. And even then, at that moment, we recognized the absurdity of the pronouncement—knew that our lives were so muddled and treacherous that even the harmonized coddling of a cat could not last long.

"Right," Greta said, and opened her arms to let Molly drop to the floor, feet first. The cat walked away, her tail swishing peevishly.

"Bonk! Bonk! Bonk!" Hannah cries, smacking the top of her head with her open hand.

"You're going to get grease in your hair," Greta says. She extends a napkin and then snatches it away each time Hannah reaches for it. Plucking at air, Hannah shrieks with laughter. I stretch my leg beneath the table and touch Greta's foot with my instep, and because she leaves it there for me to stroke blindly, monkeylike, I feel my heart bloom, and I smell spring beyond the open windows. ☘



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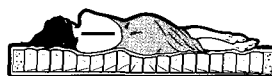
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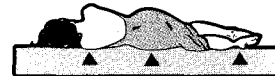
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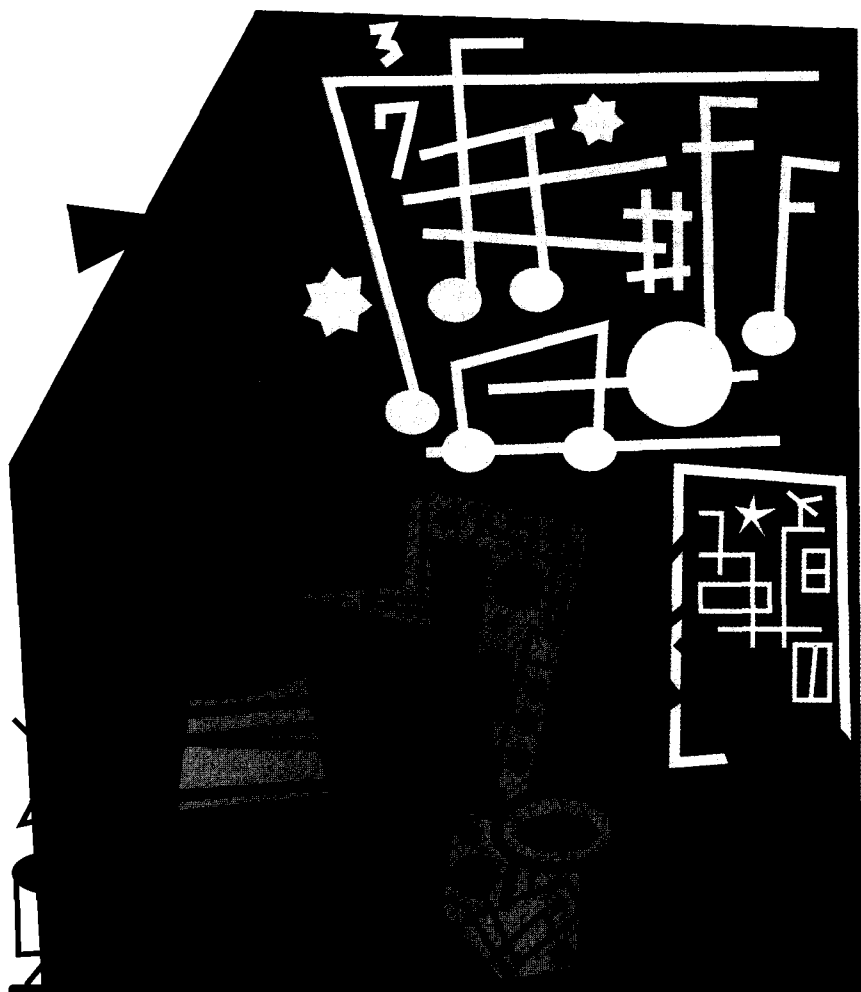
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Like Young

Jazz has been attracting its first young audiences in decades—but are they hearing a music without a future?

YOUTH has become the most frequent topic of conversation in jazz. The talk concerns a crop of instrumentalists in their twenties and very early thirties, including the tenor saxophonists Joshua Redman and James Carter, the trumpeters Roy Hargrove and Nicholas Payton, the pianists Cyrus Chestnut and Jacky Terrasson, and the bassist Christian McBride, who are supposedly luring audiences their own age and younger to jazz.

This accent on youth could be interpreted as an effort to shake the blues of

just a few years ago, when all anybody in jazz seemed to talk about was death. Sarah Vaughan died early in 1990, followed in less than three years by Art Blakey, Stan Getz, Miles Davis, and Dizzy Gillespie. Along with grief, these deaths triggered panic that time might also be running out for jazz as a commercially viable form of music. Jazz was already short of marquee names when the nineties began; the loss of five more left what threatened to become a permanent void at the top of the bill.

Some New York-based critics blamed

their city's club owners and the producers of the annual JVC Jazz Festival for having failed to groom successors to bebop's aging stars. JVC, in particular, was in danger of becoming an annual series of memorial concerts. Even so, the assumption that presenters of live music still turn the crank of the star-making machinery strikes me as naive.

Duke Ellington used to say that he was born in Newport, Rhode Island, in 1956. He meant reborn at that summer's Newport Jazz Festival, when an outbreak of dancing in the aisles during his band's performance of "Diminuendo and Crescendo in Blue" helped to land him on the cover of *Time*. Most of today's major festivals are in Europe, though, and there are far too many of them for any single one to matter in quite the same way that Newport used to.

An increasing number of festivals defray their costs by subletting their stages to record companies for "An Afternoon With Blue Note" or "An Evening With Columbia." In most cases the entire festival might as well be programmed by record companies, because only performers who have a major label's publicity campaign behind them draw big crowds today. Word of mouth about a newcomer or a resurgent veteran can still begin at an overseas festival, in a New York nightclub, or occasionally in a favorable notice by an influential critic. But only the major labels have the juice to amplify such word of mouth into what broadcasters and newspaper and magazine editors traditionally unresponsive to jazz might recognize as a buzz. Once a buzz gets started, the role of everyone who hopes to win bigger numbers for jazz—including compliant critics—becomes to keep it going.

THE loudest buzz right now is about the above-named younger musicians, who are credited with bringing jazz back to life or—what might amount to the same thing—putting more warm bodies into the seats. It should come as no surprise that the most talked-about of them happen to record for the large companies. Joshua Redman may prove to be the most talented in the group; at twenty-seven, he's already far and away the most

successful, with sales of each of his first three Warner Bros. albums having topped 100,000. Last fall DKNY Menswear (the designer Donna Karan's line of casual wear for "the urban guy who lives for the risk") outfitted Redman and his sidemen for their fifty-city tour to promote *Spirit of the Moment: Live at the Village Vanguard* (Warner Bros. 9 45923-2), Redman's fourth release. This was hailed as a breakthrough: pop stars who go on the road to promote their new albums can usually count on corporate sponsorship to offset the costs of their tours, but jazz performers are rarely so blessed.

With corporate underwriting taking the place of federal arts funding, we may soon see a new form of Social Darwinism: survival of the cutest. In addition to being photogenic, Redman is good copy twice over—as a second-generation jazz musician (his father is the tenor saxophonist Dewey Redman, formerly a sideman with Ornette Coleman and a member of Old and New Dreams), and even more so as a Harvard summa cum laude who passed up Yale Law School for a career in jazz.

You could call it the Wynton Marsalis factor. Every ten years or so, for a different set of reasons each time, cultural trendsetters rally behind one musician with whom they sense a bond and who then comes to symbolize jazz to the mass media. Before Marsalis it happened in turn to Dave Brubeck, Miles Davis, John Coltrane, and Keith Jarrett. Marsalis improbably combined youthful arrogance with an obeisance to tradition that bordered on ancestor worship; Columbia's success in marketing him persuaded the other majors that the trick to selling jazz was to play up its genealogy and long history of esoteric appeal even while attempting to demystify it by means of trim young figures in designer suits. Though unprecedented in recent memory, the election of a *type* of musician to carry the banner for jazz was probably inevitable, given the difficulty of finding another performer as charismatic as Marsalis and given the longstanding preference of magazine editors for pieces on jazz "trends," as opposed to on individual musicians.

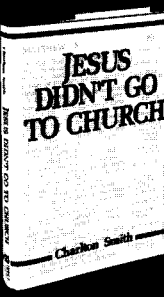
At thirty-four, Marsalis is more visible than ever, what with his recent books and radio and television programs. But he doesn't sell as many albums as he used

to, and tempting as it is to put the blame for this on a combination of overexposure and the ill will he has aroused as the artistic director of Jazz at Lincoln Center (he has been accused of cronyism, ageism, reverse racism, and narrow-mindedness in closing the doors of that establishment to reputed avant-gardists), I think there's another explanation—one entirely to Marsalis's credit as an artist unwilling to let his audience tell him who he is.

Marsalis initially won mass acceptance as a kind of substitute Miles Davis, and many of his fans were taken by surprise when his efforts to define himself as a composer led him to embrace New Orleans polyphony and Duke Ellington's talking horns. Marsalis's dance suites and extended compositions have been extremely uneven, but the problem with them from the standpoint of units sold may be that dance suites and extended compositions simply aren't what his fans expect from him or want from jazz. Marsalis's emphasis on composition has created an opening for Redman and the others. None has yet demonstrated much interest in larger forms, though many have inherited some of Marsalis's other traits, including his attitude toward tradition and innovation.

The animosity with which a lot of jazz critics regard Marsalis owes something to his having usurped their authority. His pronouncements on jazz in interviews and in occasional bylined articles carry more weight with readers than do those of any of us who write regularly about jazz (including even Albert Murray and Stanley Crouch, Marsalis's associates at Lincoln Center). And in turning thumbs down on most of the innovations in jazz since 1960—in vehemently insisting that it can't be jazz if it doesn't swing from beginning to end and explicitly refer to the blues—Marsalis has been telling disgruntled longtime listeners exactly what they were waiting to hear.

I used to believe that what scared most people away from jazz was their suspicion that they would be bored by it. In the case of much latter-day bebop, with its lineup of soloists running down the chords to no apparent purpose after stating a sketchy theme not to be heard again until the end, boredom is a reasonable response. The solution, I always thought, was to expose people to kinds of jazz in which composition and



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improvisation overlap, and in which something is going on in every measure. It wouldn't have to be Muhal Richard Abrams or Sun Ra or anything too far out; it could be Ellington or Charles Mingus or even Marsalis's score for the 1990 movie *Tune In Tomorrow*. But if new audiences are flocking to jazz on the heels of a generation of musicians who were themselves receptive to Marsalis's ideology at an impressionable age, I must be wrong. People who have never really listened to jazz want it to go on sounding the way they've been led to believe it should, so that they'll be able to recognize it in case they ever chance to hear any.

Longtime jazz listeners, for their part, want jazz to be as it was in the fifties and early sixties, when a devotion to jazz was still a sign of being hip. Iridium, a fairly new Manhattan club, features on its menu mixed drinks described as "retro cocktails." The adjective could also be applied to most of the music now heard in New York's front-line clubs—especially when the players on the bandstand are roughly the age that Miles Davis and John Coltrane are in those vintage black-and-whites on the walls of the Village Vanguard.

THE most evocative of all jazz photographs might be one taken by Art Kane for a 1959 issue of *Esquire*, showing fifty-seven musicians, famous and obscure, posed outside a brownstone on East 126th Street in Harlem. Inspired by the success of Jean Bach's lovely 1994 film *A Great Day in Harlem*, which examined both Kane's photograph and what else went on among the musicians that day, *Life* magazine last fall assembled ten of the twelve survivors to have their picture taken outside the same brownstone (now gutted and missing its cornice). By coincidence, it was the day of the Million Man March, when there was much talk on radio and television about the shortage of positive male role models in black communities. Some exemplary role models were on the steps in Harlem that day: dedicated artists and family men such as the tenor saxophonist Benny Golson, the trumpeter Art Farmer, the bassist Milt Hinton, and the pianist Hank Jones. Jazz could also offer inspiration in the stories of those musicians who reclaimed their lives from drugs (for

every Charlie Parker there's a Sonny Rollins). That jazz goes virtually unmentioned in the national discourse on race underlines its diminished relevance to everyday African-American life.

If this helps to explain why the emergence of talented instrumentalists not much older than the members of Boyz II Men answers a prayer, it also raises the question of whether a player's race much matters at this point. All but a few of the younger musicians being pushed by major labels are black; this has created a backlash of sorts among white musicians, who feel left out.

The harshest critics of today's newcomers are not whites but musicians over forty who lament that they themselves were young too soon—a decade or so before Marsalis, when an unspoken grandfather clause was in effect at record companies and only old masters whose careers pre-dated rock-and-roll were eligible for jazz stardom. "The young lions," as everyone seems to call today's young musicians, are an easy sell to longtime jazz fans, who recall the seventies and early eighties with a shudder. Unlike their immediate elders, these newcomers don't have synthesizers in their closets to apologize for. Nor are they asked to atone for the excesses of the period, not so long ago, when cutting-edge jazz was associated with a black-separatist agenda. However much they revere the past, they're not tainted by its compromises, as musicians who actually lived through it tend to be.

Nobody resents these recent arrivals for making a splash. Instead they're resented for *not* making waves the way Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie did in the 1940s and young players have been counted on to do periodically ever since. (Even Marsalis stirred things up, albeit in his own way.) There are no Thelonious Monks or Ornette Colemans in this bunch—no innovators or woolly eccentrics among those we've heard from so far. In setting craftsmanship as their highest goal these neophytes remind me of such second-tier stars of the fifties and sixties as Blue Mitchell and Wynton Kelly—players whose modesty and good taste made them ideal sidemen but whose own record dates invariably lacked the dark corners and disfigurements of character that separate great music from merely good.

SOMETHING further inhibiting this latest generation is the idea that the future of their art form, as well as their own careers, rides on the commercial success of their CDs. In concert Roy Hargrove can be positively fiery, but his albums—including the recent *Parker's Mood* (Verve 314 527 907-2), a collection of tunes written by or associated with Charlie Parker which also features Christian McBride and the pianist Stephen Scott—have been cautious and bland. The same is true of Nicholas Payton, a prodigiously gifted trumpeter barely out of his teens whose work on *From This Moment . . .* (Verve 314 527 073-2) comes across as "mature" in all the wrong ways, owing to an overabundance of medium tempos and minor keys, plus the restraining effect of no fewer than three chording instruments (Mulgrew Miller's piano, Mark Whitfield's guitar, and Monty Croft's vibes).

Blandness and premature solemnity aren't among James Carter's worries. If anything, he would do well to calm down. Carter's main horn is tenor, but he's also proficient on a variety of other reeds and woodwinds, including soprano, alto, and baritone saxophones. He's the only one of the major-label young players with avant-garde credentials, having worked with Lester Bowie and the late Julius Hemphill, among others, before starting his own quartet. Because of this, he's regarded by many as a kind of gap sealer—a figure who deserves praise for drawing on both "inside" and "outside" approaches to improvisation. Carter might erupt in screams even on a ballad or a medium-tempo groove tune, his rhythm section suspending the beat as it pummels its instruments into cacophony. This lends an element of unpredictability to Carter's solos, but the problem is that his solos are always unpredictable in exactly the same way. I suspect that even those listeners who shun what used to be called free jazz for fear of just such episodes willingly go along with Carter because they know his paroxysms will be short-lived. Minus the thematic development that is possible in free improvisation, his farrago-like solos reduce thirty years of sonic exploration to a handy vocabulary of stock effects not much different from the honks and screams of the average rhythm-and-blues saxophonist of the 1950s.



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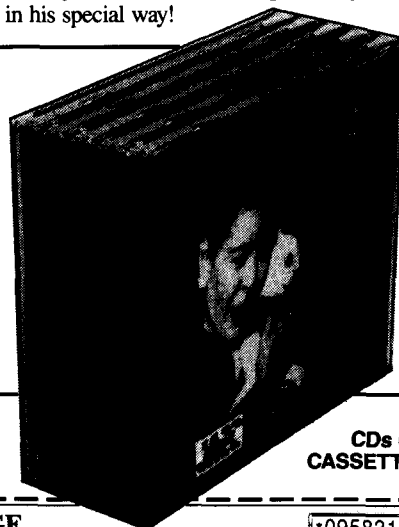
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Even so, Carter's virtues almost outweigh his faults. Though primarily influenced by John Coltrane, Wayne Shorter, and Sonny Rollins, today's tenor saxophonists have begun to investigate the work of a host of muscular and once overlooked players of the 1950s and 1960s, typified by the late Gene Ammons. Not for nothing were Ammons and others of this school (whose own role models were Arnett Cobb, Illinois Jacquet, and Ben Webster) frequently referred to as "tough" tenors. They turned up-tempo numbers into bloody brawls and more or less shadowed the melody on ballads, like a pulp detective tailing a beautiful woman he thinks he's falling in love with but doesn't quite trust. The style calls for a lot of swagger, and Carter might be the only young saxophonist who has the size for it. His best recorded performances in this vein, in which he displays an effortless swing rare for an improviser of any age, are his two versions of Duke Ellington's "The Steve-dore's Serenade," one on *The Real Quietstorm* (Atlantic Jazz 82742) and the other on a promotional CD of duets with Cyrus Chestnut from early last year, which was distributed to journalists and radio stations but not released commercially.

The Real Quietstorm—not a make-out album, despite its title and cover shot of Carter with his fiancée draped all over him—opens and closes with examples of Carter's graceful control of his baritone saxophone's upper register. He's such a talented musician that it becomes all the more frustrating when he screams gratuitously, when he taps the keys of his saxophone while breathing into it to produce a sound like that of a rusty pipe, when he slurps up to a note or holds a note for several measures—these are devices that can be put to imaginative use, but twenty-seven is awfully young for a musician to be falling back on them on nearly every number. Carter's most questionable trait may be his habit of interpolating familiar licks from Ellington, Gershwin, and Charlie Parker into solos in which they simply don't belong. Quoting can be an art; Dexter Gordon was a master at jimmying one song's chords until they fit the chords of another. His quotations were often delightful for being so off the wall. Carter's are merely patterns that fall easily under his fingers and help to kill time: musical equivalents of bor-

rowing "To be or not to be" or "All the world's a stage." The one he ought to try is "To thine own self be true."

WHEN I saw Carter perform at the Montreal International Jazz Festival last summer, he strutted across the stage as if he were already a star, displaying an abundance of what a rock or hip-hop audience might call attitude. His playing was loopy, even by his own standards. My notes don't mention what he was wearing, but if I close my eyes and recall the spin and pop of his phrases, I can see him dressed to kill in a long-tailed yellow zoot suit and a feathered fedora, like Jim Carrey in *The Mask*. I kept expecting him to roll himself into a bouncing rubber ball, or to hiss with satisfaction, "Sssomebody ssstop me!" Carter seems that intent on turning himself into a special effect—though so much sanctimony now surrounds jazz that his insincerity is refreshing, in a curious sort of way. Carter's most recent release, *Conversin' With the Elders* (Atlantic Records ATL 82908), which features numbers by John Coltrane, Charlie Parker, and Lester Young, and also guest appearances by the tenor saxophonist and clarinetist Buddy Tate and the trumpeters Lester Bowie and Harry "Sweets" Edison, among others, casts Carter in a reverential role to which he doesn't seem very well suited.

Joshua Redman was another of the festival's headliners. I thought I sensed an element of rivalry between him and Carter even before hearing them go head to head on the soundtrack of Robert Altman's *Kansas City* (Verve 314 529 554-2) and reading an article on Carter in *New York*, in which he boasted of having taken Redman's measure in a bandstand showdown (and of having caught the eye of Redman's girlfriend). With Carter stealing some of his ink, Redman seems to be favoring a broader style of playing than he did just a few years ago. He, too, risks overdoing a few pet devices, the most annoying of which is the comic upper-register burp that he uses to end far too many of his lines—to the apparent delight of audiences.

On *Spirit of the Moment*, which was recorded last March, Redman sounds much as he did in Montreal. The average new jazz CD is too long: though consumers seem to like the idea of an hour or more of music at a pop, the play-

ing time practically ensures inconsistency—especially on the part of younger performers who haven't yet learned to pace themselves. *Spirit of the Moment's* two discs clock in at almost two and a half hours, and this is more than enough time to showcase Redman's obvious gifts. The most notable of these might be his admirable sense of up-tempo melodic continuity ("Slapstick" is the best of several examples), his success at forming a band in his own image (the drummer Brian Blade is especially tuned in to him), and his increasing maturity as a balladeer. Such a generous helping of Redman also serves to expose the derivative nature of many of his solos. His debt to Sonny Rollins is plain on Jule Styne's "Just in Time," from *Bells Are Ringing*. When Rollins recorded the song, he was having fun with a show tune; Redman is playing Rollins, and setting the bar far too high for either him or us to have much fun. Critics used to chide Branford Marsalis for mimicking a different tenor player on every number. His Zelig-like approach is now standard among younger players. Oddly enough, it's on *Spirit of the Moment's* most Coltrane-influenced performance—"Dialogue," a modal folksong-like dirge similar to Coltrane's "Alabama"—that Redman gives promise of finding his own voice, in his elegant and suspenseful shadow play with the rhythm section.

"Dialogue" first appeared on Redman's 1994 studio album *MoodSwing*, which also featured a tune called "Chill," a synopated finger-snapper that drew a cheer of recognition from Redman's audience in Montreal. "Chill" is a cleverly constructed tune, funky and relaxed, much like something Horace Silver or Bobby Timmons might have written in the early 1960s, but with a bridge that goes all the way back to Lionel Hampton's swing-era anthem "Flying Home." On first hearing "Chill," I thought the bridge was the reason that Redman's melody struck me as so familiar, but in Montreal, I realized how similar the tune's cadences are to those of an obscure pop song I doubt Redman has ever heard.

THAT song is André Previn and Paul Francis Webster's "Like Young," a track from Perry Como's 1961 album *Young at Heart* which resurfaced a few years ago on Rhino/Word Beat's *The*

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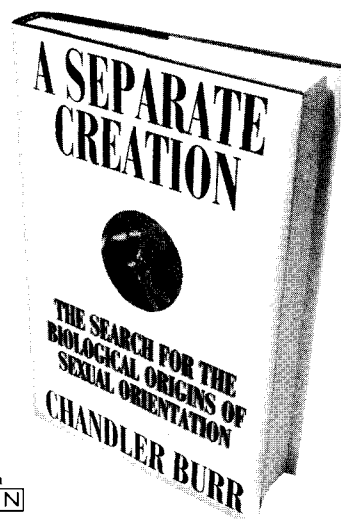
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In order to promote the Middle East peace process the United States and even Israel try to keep Syria and its president Hafez Assad engaged. It is hoped that Syrian collaboration and at least minimal concessions can be obtained. But we must ask ourselves whether Syria is a reliable partner in any peace agreement and whether Israel, from which many "concessions for peace" are being asked, would be wise to entrust its security to Syrian promises.

What are the facts?

A Rogue Country and a Rogue President. Syria is an outlaw country and is classified as a "terrorist state" by the United States. Terror is the most pervasive aspect of the Syrian regime. Much of that terror is conducted through "clients", such as the terrorist bands of the PLO, the infamous Hamas, and the Iran-sponsored Hizbullah, to all of which Syria extends protection and warm hospitality. Syria's most ruthless terror, however, is reserved for its internal opposition. In 1982, President Assad put down a rebellion in the town of Hama, in which he killed 20,000 people.

More cunning even than his Iraqi counterpart, President Saddam Hussein, he shares with him utter ruthlessness, disre-

gard of human life, and above all an abiding hatred of the West, which means primarily the "big-devil", the United

States and the "little devil", Israel, the perceived outpost of Western culture, of Western democratic concepts, and of "American imperialism" in the Middle East.

Main sources of Syria's revenue are the large-scale and officially conducted narcotics trade, and massive counterfeiting of American currency. Few doubt that Mr. Assad personally authorized the suicide attack on the Marine barracks in Beirut in which 241 Americans lost their lives and in the blowing up of Pan Am Flight #103, in which

"For Israel to survive, the Golan must stay in Israeli hands. The Golan is the price the Syrians must pay for their aggressions. All things considered, it's a small price."

The conflict between Syria and other Arabs with Israel is not about land—it is about Israel's very existence. No other country in the world would be expected to yield indispensable strategic ground to those who are sworn to destroy it. One may ask why Israeli leaders, among them experienced generals, would wish to consider such a gamble. But leaders do make fatal errors in judgment. We only need to remember British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain, who in his quest for peace agreed to the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia and thus brought about the Second World War. Considering that Syria is a rogue country with a rogue president, Israel should not make its survival dependent on Syria's "goodwill". Yes, there must be concessions. But, for Israel to survive, the Golan must stay in Israeli hands. The Golan is the price the Syrians must pay for their aggressions. All things considered, it's a small price.

270 people died. Even today, Assad gives hospitality to surviving thugs of the Nazi regime, outstanding among them Alois Bruner, Eichman's deputy and main slaughterer. The terror in Israeli cities could not possibly occur if President Assad were to forbid it.

The Obsession with the Golan. Since the founding of Israel in 1948, Syria has attacked it three times, by surprise and without provocation. In the Six-Day War of 1967, Syria suffered a decisive defeat and lost the Golan Heights, a Queens-sized plateau. Israel has been in possession ever since. The Golan is of vital strategic importance to Israel because it makes a Syrian attack against Israel virtually impossible. On the Golan, Israel is protected by sophisticated electronic surveillance and warn-

ing systems and by one of the deepest and most formidable obstacle systems in the world. The Golan is desolate and serves no real purpose, except as a defense post for Israel or as an attack-launching pad for Syria. Syria is obsessed with the Golan and has stated over and over again that it will not make peace with Israel unless and until the Golan is handed back in its entirety. But if such an exchange—the Golan Heights for peace—should come about, Israel's continued existence or destruction would depend on the good will of the Syrian dictator or his successor. It's a risk that Israel should not be asked to assume.

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Beat Generation, a likably goofy multi-disc set aimed at people whose serious interest in Allen Ginsberg and *On the Road* doesn't preclude an affection for Maynard G. Krebs and *Route 66*. Webster's lyrics have the clueless, middle-aged Como flipping for a girl who "goes where all the angry young men go," "recites poetry," and "drinks coffee with café espresso." She's got Como feeling "like young," but he's really just showing his age.

Jazz is showing its age too, or else why would there now be such a preoccupation with youth? Charlie Parker was twenty-five when he recorded "Ko Ko" and "Now's the Time"; he was dead at thirty-four, Wynton Marsalis's age now. Ornette Coleman was twenty-nine and not considered especially young when he caught the world by surprise with *The Shape of Jazz to Come*, in 1959. There have always been young jazz musicians, but only lately has anyone made a fuss over them just for *being* young—instead of for auguring change.

Are more young people listening to jazz because they can identify with Redman and the others? From what I've noticed, the answer is yes only if you count as "young" dating couples in their late twenties and early thirties. I've been to shows where the youngest people in the house were on the bandstand. In allowing itself to become so strongly identified with its past, jazz may be bargaining away its future. Positioning jazz as a sane acoustic alternative to raucous, mechanized pop might be an effective short-term sales strategy, but doesn't all this sanctimony about "tradition" and the emphasis on boilerplate bebop send a message to teenagers and college students that jazz offers absolutely nothing of interest to them? And isn't whatever the form of music that rings someone's bells at eighteen or nineteen likely to remain his or her music of choice for life?

Something else to worry about is what happens if today's whiz kids fail to sell albums in numbers sufficient to justify the generous advances that record companies are giving them (Jacky Terrasson, for example, is rumored to have signed with Blue Note for \$100,000). The majors are likely to take this as evidence that jazz just doesn't sell. It wouldn't be the first time they've arrived at this conclusion and then turned it into a self-fulfilling prophecy. ☞



Living-Room Galleries

*As the New York art world rebounds,
dealers are responding to an
increasing need for community—and to
high rents—by reviving the
artistic salon*

THE New York gallery world experienced a mini-watershed last fall, when the Grace Borgenicht Gallery shut its doors after nearly half a century. Borgenicht appeared on the scene in 1951, showing American avant-gardists such as Ilya Bolotowsky, Milton Avery, and Jimmy Ernst. By the time she retired, at eighty, they had become established figures, and her gallery had come to typify the sort of soberly run, familial

blue-chip shop to which many serious artists aspire. Borgenicht's final show was a display of complex, jewel-toned still lifes by the painter Janet Fish. At its opening the dealer presided one last time—a white-haired, dignified, formidable presence seated sternly behind the counter, as if guarding the vegetables and dip. A huge crowd milled about the gallery, and more than one person said morosely, "This is the end of an era."

by Carol Kino

The recent art-market collapse hit New York hard, causing a wave of closures and bankruptcies, and the gallery world that has since emerged has dismayed many by teetering between two extremes: a few glossy mega-dealers who have the muscle to move the market their way, and a rash of smaller, scruffier galleries that often struggle to stay afloat. Yet even through the darkest days new dealers and spaces have continued to appear. When Borgenicht opened, probably only a handful of the city's dealers promoted that era's contemporary art, let alone the American variety. Today, according to Steve Anzovin, who edits *Art in America's* annual guide to galleries, a New York dealer of contemporary art must vie for attention with 365 others—about 15 percent more than in 1990, the pre-recession peak.

Despite the renewed activity, what characterizes the present moment is a sense of frustration with the gallery itself. In Borgenicht's early days the contemporary look—spare, white-walled, and bare-floored, more like an artist's

loft than a bourgeois living room—was freshly minted. Betty Parsons, the legendary dealer who championed Robert Rauschenberg and Jackson Pollock, had opened New York's first such gallery in 1946. Thirty years later the critic Brian O'Doherty, in a famous series of essays titled *Inside the White Cube*, decoded the aesthetic and market assumptions that underlie the presumed neutrality of such a space. Today many of New York's chicest shows, most of which are conceptual, seem intent on hammering home the idea that we are all participating in a big cliché. The artist fills the exhibition space with furniture from the back room, where deals are traditionally made, thus putting the business end of things on display. Or it is somehow made clear that the gallery itself has become a framing device and we are the installation. It has actually become a cliché to invoke the cliché—a nice display of Postmodernist tail-chasing. Perhaps that's why, as the art world moves more surely into the mood and aesthetic that will come to define the nineties, the motif that keeps cropping up dates from a time before Borgenicht's—the era of the salon.

IN the annals of art the word “salon” has a slippery range of meanings and associations. One thinks first of the French Salon, the juried expositions put on by the Académie every year or so from 1667 on, which later became one of the first ways for the public to see new art. In the late nineteenth century the Paris Salons arose as an alternative to this official display. These huge gatherings, often with thousands of works and tens of thousands of viewers, became important venues for Impressionism, the avant-garde that eventually forced the academy out of favor. Although the original Salon still resonates in the imagination the way Emile Zola famously described it—an “absolute cacophony”—“salon” has become another way of saying “group show.”

Whereas the public salon has often helped to advance the avant-garde, the private salon seems to spring up in someone's home whenever it needs nurturing. The salon of Gertrude and Leo Stein in turn-of-the-century Paris, where the “modern” community gathered to hash over Picasso and Matisse, is the prime

example. In New York, as European modernism was filtering into this country at the time of the First World War, most creative movements got their start in someone's living room. At Mabel Dodge's “Evenings” artists exchanged ideas with many of the city's flashiest political and intellectual figures. The collectors Walter and Louise Arensberg provided late-night hospitality for Francis Picabia and Marcel Duchamp, the reigning deities of New York Dada.

For “absolute cacophony” today, visit an art fair, where hundreds of dealers gather under one roof to hawk their wares to collectors and one another. This kind of clubby, convivial event is becoming such an important part of the international art market that the trade magazine *Art & Auction* recently termed art fairs a “mania.” One reason is simple economics—the need to get maximum bang for each buck spent in overhead. Another is that for an art market whose rapid growth has required increasing professionalization, it's fun to get back to those old horse-trading roots.

A recent variation is the art fair in a hotel, which manages to be both public and private. Dealers, usually young and cutting-edge, take over a few floors and install their wares in individual rooms. The Gramercy International, the granddaddy of the bunch, was held in New York for the third time last May. As usual, it proved a barometer of the trendiest art trends, and also a voyage in miniature through salons of New York past. Last year the highlight was a room decked out in tribute to Florine Stettheimer, whose campy, idiosyncratic portraits, many based on her own family's Jazz Age salon, recently enjoyed a vogue. This time it was a performance by Brigid Berlin, a former denizen of Andy Warhol's Factory. One could also visit rooms hosted by the dealers Holly Solomon and Gracie Mansion. Solomon, whose most notable artist is probably Nam June Paik, the creator of video art, began by holding a salon in her home in 1969. Mansion helped to jump-start the East Village funk scene in 1982 by holding a photography show in the toilet of her flat.

Like art fairs, today's private salons are prompted in part by financial exigency. Many dealers who closed galleries over the past few years have been showing work in their homes. Renée Riccar-

do, for instance, shut down her SoHo gallery, Arena, in 1993 and reopened it in her Brooklyn apartment. “The people who actually survive,” she told me once when I stopped by, “are the ones who are doing their business creatively.” Arena is in a quiet street of turn-of-the-century brownstones. The interior walls are ivory instead of white, the ceiling is decked with Victorian trim, and the dining room holds some handsome Eames and Breuer chairs. Art must compete for attention with radiators, a bed, the toilet, and a dog basket—not to mention the basket's frequently yapping occupant.

Not long ago the parlor held a sculpture of a miniature log cabin—a comment of some sort on masculine identity from Jason Middlebrook, a recent art-school graduate. Another time Rachel Harrison had fitted out the room like a bomb shelter, complete with randomly placed cans of peas. (She spent ages telling me what it all meant.)

Even if much of the gallery's art aims for spunky irreverence, its weekly openings are earnest. Billed as salons, they are held on Sunday afternoons; apple juice, wine, and cookies are served. Visitors are said to spend hours there, until Riccardo kicks them out. “People are responding to it,” she says, “because they're looking for some comfort and sharing.”

Another obvious pleasure offered by a salon-style space is the sense of being in on a privileged and bohemian experience. I've found this, paradoxically, at galleries that are less domestic—for example, the enormous NoHo loft where the veteran dealer Barbara Braathen mounts an occasional show. Braathen closed her storefront gallery in 1989 and, like many, chose to go “underground,” selling privately. One has to know about her small openings to find them; the traditional gallery opening is pretty much accessible to anyone who spots it from the street. “In our age,” Braathen told me recently, “the gallery-as-a-store concept is kind of running out of energy, because it costs so much to run and because people don't have time to go to stores. What we see now is more of bringing the art back into the home and having parties.”

Though Braathen doesn't call her openings salons, her shows often summon up an alluringly taboo aesthetic. Last fall a one-week show featured small

oil paintings by Sally Randall that appropriated details from David and Ingres, who were staples of the vanquished French Académie. Another show displayed work by fifty artists and was hung "salon-style": in places it ranged the entire length and breadth of the wall, after the fashion of the nineteenth century. The show was focused on the theme of beauty, a loaded subject that has lately enjoyed a resurgence. Both events were celebrated with long, late, crowded openings. At one, two men became so inebriated that they toppled to the floor.

OUTSIDE the art world bohemianism, or at least a semblance of it, has probably never looked so mainstream. It's popular these days to assume that the arts are becoming marginalized. But over the past few years, since The Gap first put the performance poet Max Blagg in a TV ad, the coffeehouse-bookstore has gone mass-market, and gallery and museum sites seem to go up almost daily on the Internet.

In New York several upmarket hotels have recently opened book and music salons, and a big draw on the society circuit is the frequent evening art openings at Stubbs Books & Prints, an interior-decorating concern. At the last Gramercy fair, I was invited to two "art parties," one of them run by a fellow who said he was "temporarily" in advertising; and my soap-opera-actor neighbor tells me that many of his friends are starting theater and comedy salons. Recently even fashion designers have elected to present their new collections in salonlike settings. In such a climate staging an art event seems an entirely natural career move for a young entrepreneur.

Three years ago Gina Fiore, then twenty-five, moved into a minuscule Greenwich Village studio in which the painter Jackson Pollock had briefly lived. It struck her as a perfect place to show art; she later expanded her plans to include a wine-tasting and cooking-class business. The Gina Fiore Salon has been held five or six times over the past year, presenting art displays and poetry readings. Every time I visit, the work—usually small abstract works on paper—seems from afar to be serious and strong. But it is hard to get a good look, because the place is always jammed with people. Fiore told me once that she is sometimes

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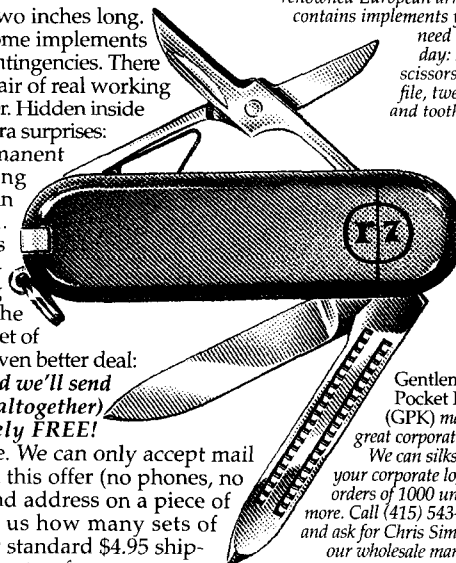
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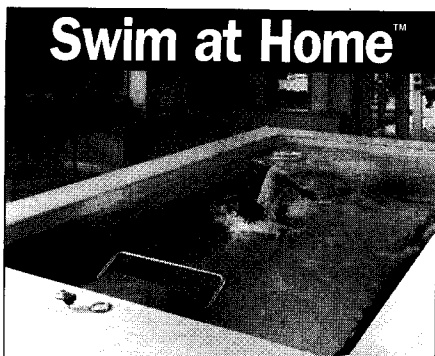
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LARRY REID GOODHUE

surprised by the turnout. "People feel intimidated going into Gagosian and Pace-Wildenstein," she said, citing the city's two most prominent mega-dealers. (She was once an intern at Pace.) "It's a different way of seeing work, and people find that really refreshing."

A similar explanation seems to lie behind the growing interest in Jill Brienza's salons, held at the Hotel Roger Smith. Though the hotel, in midtown Manhattan, is well off the beaten gallery track, one of the owners, James Knowles, who took it over in 1989, has worked to establish it as an artists' hangout since. Brienza began working there two and a half years ago, when she was twenty, after a brief stint as the curator of nightclub art shows. Today she supplements a regular gallery program with occasional readings, art and music events, and a series of frequent and free dinners that she calls "advertising in a very exclusive, nice way." (A recent evening celebrated "Bright," a show of fresh, exciting abstract work by young unknowns.)

The events are held in a penthouse apartment furnished much as it was in the 1940s, when the hotel's founder lived there, with family portraits, potted plants, and a Steinway grand. Admission is by invitation, and even if one does see the occasional art star or celebrity in the crowd, the atmosphere remains familial. Most nights Brienza's parents come in from Brooklyn; sometimes someone plays the piano; and the hostess makes constant introductions. (It probably doesn't hurt that Brienza looks like a junior Morticia Addams and is always wearing some vampy dress made by her mother, a former fashion designer.) The attitude of exclusivity combined with inclusiveness seems a particularly twentysomething stance.

Back in conventional gallery territory, the salon is making inroads even on the white cube itself. Over the past year I've noticed more galleries experimenting with such elements as poetry readings, music-filled openings, decorative interiors, and extended evening hours, the better to attract new clients and enthusiasts. One SoHo space, the three-year-old Tricia Collins • Grand Salon, is organized entirely around the salon ethos. It is owned by Tricia Collins, who, as part of the team Collins & Milazzo, was one of the more respected curator-critics to

emerge from the 1980s East Village conceptual-art scene. The pair held weekly artists' soirées, organized shows that pinpointed coming trends, and wrote art-speak-filled manifestos to explicate them. Many of the unknowns they championed early, such as Jeff Koons and Ross Bleckner, became art stars.

"It's not that I don't appreciate rhetoric and theory," Collins told me recently. "I just think it's time for a more straightforward or poetic approach." Grand Salon is her bid to encourage "a more public form of the kind of conversations that took place in my living room," and thereby to "reintroduce meaning." It works in a way that seems to be half commercial space, half conceptual project. In the middle of the main room a couch and two armchairs are grouped around a coffee table. "To me, the furniture functions literally and symbolically in order to promote dialogue," Collins said when I came in. *Oh, sure*, I thought. But then I realized what an unusual experience it is to sit talking with a dealer in the middle of a gallery, in full view of anyone who happens to pass by—artist, collector, or potential competitor—or even to plunk down on the couch for a while and look at the art by oneself.

From time to time Collins hosts an evening art film, talk, or reading, and she says that these occasions are what Grand Salon is all about. I find, though, that I've come to rely on the gallery not for its evenings but for regular viewings of terrific painting—a medium that is often rumored to be going the way of print journalism. Last fall I saw some wonderfully unpretentious fruit and flower portraits, laden with sequins and glitter, by the artist Tabboo!, who moonlights as a drag performer. Later Stefano Peroli and Charles Clough presented a relatively austere double bill of brilliantly hued abstractions. Another offering was unabashedly spiritual—joyful oil paintings of saints and supplicants, collaged with shells, jewelry, and broken bits of mirror, by Mary L. Proctor, a North Florida junkyard dealer who began making art last year, when the Lord advised her to. "There has to be space for contemplation," Collins told me one afternoon as we sat on her couch. Oddly enough, that seems a sentiment with which Grace Borgenicht, sitting coolly behind her gallery counter, might very well have agreed. ☛

The Latest Fashion in Irrationality

*When the inner child finds a guardian angel,
publishers are in heaven*

by Wendy Kaminer

FINALLY, after nearly ten years of getting in touch with their inner children and recovering from abuse, millions of consumers of personal-development ideas have found the perfect parents. Guardian angels watch over all of us, best-selling books about angels proclaim. Like Superman, they swoop down and save us from sudden death—lifting us out of the way of oncoming cars or catching us when we fall off cliffs. Like Mr. Chips, they nurture and inspire us: “We were given an angel to help us in the creation and writing of this book,” Alma Daniel, Timothy Wyllie, and Andrew Ramer, the authors of *Ask Your Angels*, confide, describing angels as the “social workers of the universe.” They give us unsolicited, unconditional love.

Descending from heaven, or wherever, not bound by the mere material world, angels also give us proof of immortality and the comforting belief that there is no death, only some sort of energy transformation, which is confirmed by other best-selling spirituality books. *The Celestine Prophecy*, by James Redfield, assures us that what we imagine as death is a happy transition to a higher spiritual plane: a new Eden awaits us in the next millennium. Books about near-death experiences describe the brief sojourns in heaven of people who died but were sent back to earth by God, or God’s minions, to complete their missions or simply to spread

the word: there is no death. Books about reincarnation promise us many lives before we achieve spiritual perfection and ascend in the end to—whatever. For Americans who are depressed about the future of this material world and anxious about violent crime, income inequality,

near-death experience, held the No. 1 slot on the *New York Times* list for more than thirty weeks. Sales of Sophy Burnham’s *A Book of Angels* have reached about 750,000. Angel books have sold millions of copies, as have books about alien abductions. *Abduction*, John E. Mack’s

1994 account of his interviews with “abductees,” and Whitley Strieber’s *Communion*, a firsthand account of abduction, have been best-sellers as well.

The abduction stories are not simple anodynes; aliens are a lot scarier and more aggressive than angels. In some ways they are like the bad parents of recovery books. Indeed, aliens engage in the worst form of abuse—sexual molestation. (And abduction stories rely on the reader’s belief in “recovered-memory syndrome,” popularized by the recovery movement.) But extraterrestrial abuse often turns out to be a form of tough love, or at least a necessity: the aliens are mating with us, creating a hybrid, higher life form. Although tales of alien abduction

generally begin in terror, they end in enlightenment—the revelation that we are not alone in an indifferent universe. Usually the aliens want to save us from an impending apocalypse.

Like established religions, mass-market spirituality books often differ ideologically—some tell us we only live once, while others preach reincarnation—but they share a general belief in immortality



inadequate health care, war, global warming, or the decline of the nuclear family, there is incredibly good news about the cosmos.

Publishers of popular spirituality books have already died and gone to heaven. *The Celestine Prophecy* recently passed its hundredth week on the *New York Times* best-seller list. *Embraced by the Light*, Betty J. Eadie’s report on her

and the presence of extraterrestrial or celestial beings devoted to our welfare. They share as well a general disdain for reason, enshrined by the therapeutic culture. Drawing on popular psychology even more than on religion, experts on angels, aliens, and life after death traffic in "feeling realities." John Mack, a psychiatrist, writes that he took seriously an alien-abduction story if "what was being reported was felt to be real by the experimenter . . . and communicated sincerely" (as if sincerity in these cases might not be simply a measure of the intensity of delusion). The truth lies in what you feel, personal-development experts assert, not what you "know in your head," much less what you can prove. People who have talked to their guardian angels, ET, or God can only agree.

Spirituality authors, who are generally forgoing of most human foibles (people aren't bad, only good or less evolved), take a hard line on intellectualism. Murder they can rationalize: murder victims are spirits who volunteered to be "part of some other soul's enlightenment test," Marlo Morgan reports in *Mutant Message Down Under*, a best-selling story of spiritual encounters with aborigines. Skepticism they view with contempt, as the refuge of the unenlightened. *The Celestine Prophecy* workbook, a guide to using *The Celestine Prophecy*, begins by reminding us that "those who take a strictly intellectual approach to this subject will be the last to 'get it.'" To change the world we must "break through the habits of skepticism and denial."

Like virtually all books of its genre, *The Celestine Prophecy* can confidently demand that readers suspend their disbelief because it tells so many people precisely what they want to hear. Its message is that there is no such thing as a coincidence; there are no chance encounters, no arbitrary events, no reasons for existential angst. There is only cosmic synchronicity, to which we become attuned as we evolve spiritually. (The assurance that events are not random, that we live in a universe ordered by a benign supernatural being, is repeated in many popular spirituality books.) We have, then, no reason to worry about the future; it holds the promise of paradise. According to *The Celestine Prophecy*, in the future humankind will evolve into a spiritually enlightened culture of peace and harmony.

In this new Eden critical thinking will be unnecessary. Truth will be self-evident and accessible to all. People will simply "intuit" the answers to global problems like pollution, and to individual problems as well. "Guided by their intuitions, everyone will know precisely what to do and when to do it." Who would choose the hard work of thinking over the serenity of knowledge bred in the bone?

So reason is reduced to a mere developmental stage for humankind. *The Celestine Prophecy* provides a summary history of the past thousand years. Born out of the secularization of human culture, science was useful in providing us with a map of the material world; but it cannot help us to understand the nonmaterial world of interpersonal energy or the spiritual questions that confront us as we approach the millennium. As one of the characters in the book explains, a "particular attitude known as scientific skepticism . . . served us well with the more obvious phenomena in nature, with objects such as rocks and bodies and trees, objects everyone can perceive no matter how skeptical they are." But, she continues, thanks to Einstein we now know that "the basic stuff of the universe" is "a kind of pure energy that is malleable to human intention and expectation . . . our expectation itself causes our energy to flow out into the world and affect other energy systems." Most scientists simply can't take this notion seriously, she laments.

You can hear in this denigration of science an attempt to appropriate its credibility, which is typically New Age. (Angel books, for example, talk about doing scientific research on the existence of angels.) Einstein is on the side of *The Celestine Prophecy*, we're told. Most scientists are not sufficiently evolved to carry on his work. After all, they would not take seriously the assertion that in the future human beings will be raised "to higher and higher vibrations." (There is much talk about vibrations in pop spirituality books; highly evolved people usually vibrate more.) *The Celestine Prophecy* reports that as we evolve, vibrating at higher levels, we become invisible to the less evolved among us. As distilled spiritual energy, we achieve virtual immortality.

All these insights into the meaning of

everything are delivered in what the flap copy for *The Celestine Prophecy* calls "a parable filled with vital truths"—a description bound to lead an unsophisticated reader to believe that this book is fact, not fiction. It is, however, a dime-novel adventure story about a man who goes on a quest in Peru to discover an ancient Mayan manuscript containing the Nine Insights that will save humankind. The story is told in the first person; the style is testimonial and borrows liberally from popular notions of spirituality and personal development. *Mutant Message Down Under* is equally coy about the veracity of the author's reported adventure with aborigines: the flap copy labels the book fiction, but in her preface Morgan claims that it was "inspired by actual experience." She writes, "It is sold as a novel to protect the small tribe of Aborigines from legal involvement." In other words, it's a docudrama, which some readers are apt to consider literally true.

For people who believe in angels, to be sure, believing in *The Celestine Prophecy* isn't much of a leap—angel books tell similar truths. According to *A Book of Angels* (which started a publishing trend), angels and other supernatural beings are constantly intervening in our lives. Whatever we consider coincidence is evidence of the divine. And we can facilitate divine intervention through prayer: "It is the pleasure of the universe to give us what we need." This means that mind and spirit are stronger than matter. We can control events, making wishes and dreams come true. *The Celestine Prophecy* makes a similar claim: "When you have acquired enough energy, you are ready to consciously engage evolution . . . to produce the coincidences that will lead you forward." Angel books, however, require a little less initiative: you don't "consciously engage" evolution yourself; you simply ask your angel.

THE appeal of these books is clear. They promise us bliss—a world of no evil (only spiritual retardation), fear, loneliness, pain, or death. The failure to deal with evil is striking. In near-death-experience accounts God, or the "Being of Light" who greets us when we die, is nonjudgmental. Like a wise but indulgent parent, He, She, or It smiles ruefully upon us when we review our sins, knowing that we will do better next time.

It's easy to sell good news like this, and the authors confidently rely on classic fallacious arguments. They argue by declaration, which is what makes the books so amusing. In matter-of-fact, authoritative tones, the authors tell us how plants and human beings exchange energy—or they describe what angels look like, whether or how they're sexed, how they communicate with human beings, and how they differ from ghosts. Readers might be expected to wonder, How do they know?

What makes fantastic declarations believable is, in part, the vehemence with which they're proffered. Again, in the world of spirituality as well as of pop psychology, intensity of personal belief is evidence of truth. It is considered very bad form—even abuse—to challenge the veracity of any personal testimony that might be offered in a twelve-step group or on a talk show, unless the testimony itself is equivocal. Once, I landed on a radio show with a woman who claimed that she and her family had been abducted and sexually molested by aliens. When I said that it might be difficult for some people to accept her tale at face value, she angrily offered as evidence of her encounters bodily markings, memories, and (in a stab at empiricism) “metallurgically flattened shrubbery” outside her house. I told her that I was sorry for her trouble. Sometimes I, too, feel as if I'm sleeping with an extraterrestrial.

Ubiquity of belief is also offered as evidence of truth. *Ask Your Angels* asserts that the references to angels in popular culture—in songs such as “Teen Angel” and “Johnny Angel,” and in movies such as *It's a Wonderful Life* and *Heaven Knows, Mr. Allison*—constitute evidence that angels exist, as do the popularity of angel books and the willingness of the industry to publish them. Whatever sells, whatever many people believe strongly, must be true. There are, however, exceptions to this reliance on feelings as evidence of truth: if, for instance, your feelings lead to disbelief instead of belief, they're apt to be dismissed as some form of denial. This is not a common problem. Usually intellectualism, not “feeling reality,” is blamed for disbelief. But, some angel experts suggest, there may be emotional as well as intellectual barriers to belief:

unwillingness to believe in angels can reflect low self-esteem.

These are perfectly closed belief systems; the possibility of error is never considered. If you don't see angels, or energy fields emanating from your rhododendron, you simply don't know how to look for them. The possibility that some people who believe that they commune with angels or ghosts or enjoy mystical out-of-body experiences may be hallucinating is given little credence. Like detective stories, spirituality books usually discard the most plausible explanations and adopt the most implausible ones for the mysteries they encounter. Rational, alternative explanations for a belief don't, after all, assume the truth of whatever is believed.

All these styles of argument—arguing by declaration, arguing from intensity and ubiquity of belief, and arguing from a conclusion—are routinely employed by personal-development experts, including codependency gurus and a range of inspirational and motivational speakers. So it is easy for readers to switch from one belief system to another—to turn from codependency books to books about angels.

In fact, authors and publishers expect that many of these books will share an audience, and they offer similar solace. They present solutions to both global and individual problems: focusing on personal spiritual evolution and the evolution of humankind, they're not above giving advice about how to get a better job. Norman Vincent Peale's best seller *The Power of Positive Thinking* has the same preoccupation with the metaphysical and the trivial: it will cure existential anxiety and improve one's golf game. Virtually all personal-development and spirituality books partake of the positive-thinking tradition, which pre-dated Peale by at least a hundred years. They also cross-reference one another. *Ask Your Angels*, for example, includes a twelve-step angel program. *The Celestine Prophecy* talks about codependency, and *The Celestine Prophecy* workbook cites the best-selling alternative-medicine guru Deepak Chopra.

These books offer membership in a spiritual elite. Indeed, the authors tend to see themselves as messiahs, chosen by aliens, angels, or various “Beings of Light” to help save the world. (People

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who claim to have been abducted by aliens often observe that they have always felt "special" and now know that their alienation was literal.) But a spiritual encounter isn't necessary to join the elite; merely reading these books and being open to their messages is cited as a means to enlightenment.

Belief systems like this demand very little of us. A good attitude substitutes for good works. Self-absorption may be a spiritual imperative. Nineteenth-century revivalists, late-twentieth-century recovery-movement experts, and an expert on spirituality like James Redfield tell us that by working on our own religious, psychological, or spiritual evolution, we are working on the world. "Your own willingness to take time to study *The Celestine Prophecy* is part of the evolutionary process," Redfield writes. "*The amount of consciousness you bring to the collective mind is part of your contribution.*"

Activity is not required; in this world there is no such thing as a sin of omission. Popular spirituality books involve even less self-help than popular psychology, with its exaltation of experts; instead of working through the twelve steps or any other technique, you can now wait for angelic intervention. But what is perhaps even more troubling than the childlike passivity encouraged by these books is their denigration of skepticism and their encouragement of habits of unreason, which carry over into political and work and home life. The elevation of personal truths and personal testimony over logic and verifiable fact which links popular psychology and popular spirituality today also infects other kinds of belief.

Consider the militia movement, which invests the New World Order with demonic power. Propaganda of the extreme right (like propaganda of the extreme left twenty-five years ago) employs the same techniques of argument found in popular spirituality books. Propagandists argue by declaration, relying on intensity and relative ubiquity of belief. (Genuinely ubiquitous beliefs, however, lose the power of cultism: if the participation of some people in the belief system provides a reality test and a source of solidarity, the participation of many people makes the system less special.)

There are also clear analogies between the denial of coincidence that's

central to popular spirituality literature and the embrace of conspiracy theories. If angel books reflect the need to believe in omnipotent, absolute good, extremist political groups reflect the need to believe in omnipotent evil—in the form of the U.S. government or the New World Order. There are virtually no political accidents in the view of a conspiracy theorist; whatever happens happens for a reason, generally the worst.

It's not surprising, then, to find cross-overs from New Age beliefs to the militias. I know a convert to the militia movement who was once deeply enmeshed in the Church of Scientology and remains an avid believer in the paranormal. She has always thrived on the presence of enemies, and so, in a way, do popular spirituality authors. Even if there is no evil in the benevolent universe they depict, only unenlightenment, there are still enemies: notably science, rationalism, and established religion, which is almost always distinguished from spirituality as doctrine rather than feeling. (In *The Celestine Prophecy* the primary villains are not scientists but priests.) Despite their majoritarian appeal, mass-market spirituality books offer the pleasures of membership in a besieged minority. Like extremist political movements, they shine with moral vanity. ☸

Robert Penn McInerney

by Charles Thompson

THE LAST OF THE SAVAGES

by Jay McInerney.

Knopf, 271 pages,

\$24.00.

WITHIN the confined universe of commercial literature it is not uncommon to recognize in the writing of one author an allusion or event recalling the work of another. References are a natural way for writers to pay tribute to peers and predecessors. One well-known tribute in American literature comes near the end of *The Catcher in the Rye*,

when Holden Caulfield finds and erases an obscenity scrawled in a school stairwell, an obvious tip of the literary cap by J. D. Salinger to F. Scott Fitzgerald, whose Nick Carraway, twenty years earlier, was dismayed to find an epithet in the same spirit etched on Jay Gatsby's steps in *The Great Gatsby*.

Occasionally, however, a work comes along in which the motivation for literary cap-tipping seems less straightforward. In such a work references and passages found in a previously published volume are echoed so insistently as to leave the reader wondering whether the similarities constitute a deliberate though unacknowledged homage—or not.

Jay McInerney's ambitious new novel of the American South is such a work: it contains such an uncanny series of likenesses to Robert Penn Warren's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel *All the King's Men* (1946) that to attempt a comparison of the two novels becomes almost irresistible.

In *The Last of the Savages*, McInerney relates the rise to power, and the eventual decay, of Will Savage, an idealistic, mercurial southerner bent on creating an empire in the name of an oppressed people—in this case, the ceaselessly exploited black blues musicians of the South. Narrating the story is Patrick Keane, Savage's best friend and sometime confidant, a passive, self-effacing bystander to the chaos who nevertheless remains close enough to his subject to report from the insider's point of view, yet is just far enough outside the circle of corruption to avoid the mammon that ultimately leads to his friend's collapse.

Many readers will recall roughly the same story line in *King's Men*. Those who do not can simply repeat the paragraph above, substitute the name Willie Stark for Will Savage, poor white southern taxpayers for poor black southern blues musicians, and Jack Burden for Patrick Keane, and come up with a pretty fair summation of that book's plot. The alliterative similarity of the protagonists' names aside, however, such a story line, or device by which to tell it, is not in and of itself necessarily remarkable—Fitzgerald, for one, employed the same innocent-witness-relates-tale-of-American-Dream-and-demise in *Gatsby*. But the parallels between *Savages* and *King's Men* do not flower at the surface only to wither in the subtext. In fact, they sprout

sturdy roots that plunge continually deeper as the novel passes through its seasons.

Strikingly similar casts of characters surround Savage and Stark. Each hires a gun-wielding flunky to serve as body-guard and sycophant (Stubblefield in Savage's case, Sugar-Boy in Stark's). Both men tomcat with a string of bimbos, floozies, and otherwise available women while remaining technically married but separated from their wives, and both eventually return to their wives. Both are labeled "nigger-lovers" by enemies.

Plot details in the two books seem scripted by parallel minds. An early scene in each book presents duck hunting as the narrator's rite of passage into southern manhood. Both narrators receive instruction from tough-as-nails but paternal southern gentlemen. Keane's mentor is Cordell Savage, Will's father ("On an incoming bird, just try to put the bead below its beak"); Burden's is Judge Montague Irwin ("You got to lead a duck, son"). Symbolic relevance of the hunting episodes to subsequent events is later revealed.

Both narrators also find themselves betrayed by their friend-subject. Savage winds up sleeping with Lollie Baker, the object of Keane's adolescent desire, Stark with Anne Stanton, Jack Burden's onetime girlfriend. These women occupy like positions in the narrators' sexual development: Keane finds himself on the brink of losing his virginity to Baker when a surprise appearance by his school housemaster thwarts the proceedings. Keane hides in the closet to avoid scandal. In a similar sequence of events the virginal and near-naked Burden and Stanton are nearly discovered by Burden's mother. Stanton hides in the bathroom, and honor is preserved.

HOLLYWOOD could not have dreamed up a coincidence more improbable than the one that introduces subplots in both books in the form of Civil War-era diaries and letters used by the respective narrators as the centerpiece of a university history thesis. In *Savages* history major Keane uses excerpts from the 1861 diary of Binnie Pilcher Savage as a jumping-off point for research into a tragic plantation saga that began with the sale of the wife of a slave. In *King's Men* history doctoral

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"Give Us a Break!"

Letters in the designated squares spell SPACED OUT. After each solution note the correct form of the spaced-out wording is given in italics. Across. 1. B + ALL + ET; *b everything et* 6. SC(R)AM'S; *dishonest artifice's* 11. A(LIST) + AIR; *Maclean* 12. OLIO (homophone); *spread said* 13. S(L)OW; *not rapid* 14. SALAMI (anag.); *sausage, Islama bad* 15. FE(I + G)NS; *g in* 17. DE(FOR)MS; *disfigures* 18. ID + EA; *innovation* 22. A + MUSING; *thinking* 24. PI'S + CINE; *of fish* 26. RO(G)UE; *g out* 27. AN(TEN)NA; *rabbit ears* 31. SENIOR (hid. rev.); *with elder* 33. NU(DIS)T; *is hell* 34. CHAT (anag.); *chin abysmally acht* 35. GRE + Y; *hue y* 36. A(L)SPICE (special anag.); *monkeying around* 37. SERAPE (anag.); *Shake speare* 38. S + OUTER; *justice* Down. 1. B(AS)ED; *founded* 2. AL + LIE + D; *together Capone lie* 3. LI + ON; *li feline* 4. E(THE)R (Re rev.); *quarter back* 5. TAX + I(MA)N; *ma driver* 7. C(RANI)UM; *braincase* 8. A + LAD + DIN; *clamor* 9. M + I + ME(T); *aper m* 10. S(OIL)AGE; *salad dressing* 15. FOR + CES; *drives* 16. SI(S)TE + R; *s kin* 19. S(P) + RINGS; *s loops* 20. A + SUN + DER (red rev.); *apart* 21. WINESAP (anag.); *pine apple* 23. M + ENIALS (aliens anag.); *wantonly* 25. UNL(A)CE (Uncle anag.); *a untie* 28. TORSO (anag.); *misspelt* 29. (W)ALTER; *no w* 30. PURE (hid. rev.); *back packing* 32. WHIT (anag.); *redraft*

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candidate Burden bases his dissertation on the 1850s and 1860s papers of Cass Mastern, which tell the story of a plantation disaster following the sale of a slave wife. Both projects conclude unsatisfactorily—Keane's work is rejected for publication; Burden simply gives up on his before graduation.

Paternal confusion and Oedipal conflict grow in fertile soil. Keane is the biological father of Savage's son, through artificial insemination, though his own wife doesn't know it. Burden ultimately discovers that his true father is Judge Irwin. Part of Cordell Savage's reputation is based on a legend that he killed his abusive father to protect his mother. Burden confesses that "by killing my father I had saved my mother's soul."

In *Savages*, McInerney uses the same vehicle of redemption that Warren used in *King's Men*. In the latter Willie Stark tries to reclaim his once-pure soul by building a gargantuan hospital for the South's common folk, a place where "any man or woman or child who is sick or in pain" may receive free treatment. Stark becomes obsessed by the project, which he intends to keep unsoiled by the rotten politics and dirty money that have corrupted him. McInerney bestows on his hero the same altruistic plan as recompense for a wanton past. After selling his interest in a record label, Savage immediately pours \$20 million "into a free clinic and hospital in the Mississippi Delta." Savage's wife, Taleesha, says later, "The free clinic was a wonderful idea, but if he doesn't stop giving away money . . . I think that's what he wants, you know, to give it all away, to wash his hands."

And though in the end Stark dies and Savage lives, their lives, along with the lives of their biographers, are summed up in similar style. On the last page of his book McInerney writes, "If this has been the story of Will's life, more than my own, that is because he has lived." Fifty years earlier, four pages from the end of his book, Warren wrote, "This has been the story of Willie Stark, but it is my story, too. For I have a story. It is the story of a man who lived. . . ."

McInerney makes fleeting references to previously published material. In Chapter 14 he writes, "I think it was Faulkner—usually a safe bet in these matters—who said the Mississippi Delta originated in the lobby of the Peabody."

He mentions favorite books, poets, and authors, and as many southern icons as possible: Robert E. Lee, Elvis Presley, Medgar Evers, Tennessee Williams, *Gone With the Wind*, Alabama sharecroppers, Shilo, Chickamauga, Martin Luther King Jr., Huck Finn, Robert Johnson, Colonel Tom Parker, James Earl Ray, Jimmy Carter, Civil War re-enactors, Stonewall Jackson, Jeb Stuart, the Ku Klux Klan, Otis Redding, Sam Phillips, and Henry Clay, among others. But he does not mention *All the King's Men*, Robert Penn Warren, or even Huey Long, the famed southern politician upon whose life *King's Men* is widely believed to be based, although Long is never mentioned in that book. The closest McInerney gets to any acknowledgment of inspiration from *King's Men* comes in a cast-off line from Will Savage: "All you need to know is that it's about as venal and corrupt as Louisiana politics."

What is one to make of all this? Four questions come to mind. Was everyone expected to notice all these parallels (as one notices the parallels between *Roger's Version* and *The Scarlet Letter*, or between *West Side Story* and *Romeo and Juliet*)? Was nobody supposed to notice? Are the parallels a matter of sheer coincidence—just one of those things? And finally, what does McInerney do with the rich lode of material he is working—what kind of a novel is this, what are its aspirations, and to what extent does it succeed? Unfortunately, the book itself, the book jacket, and the accompanying publicity materials are mute on the first three questions, and so we must suspend inquiry and turn to the fourth.

McInerney has a reputation as a stylist, but in *Savages* his prose has all the sparkle of a parking ticket. Set-piece descriptions end in lines like "What can I say—we were all very young at the time." Some of the dialogue sags under the weight of generic exposition. For example, here is Cordell Savage on his son's involvement with a black woman:

"It may be up here [at Yale] . . . there's nothing wrong with it. . . . But I'm telling you that down south this is a very grave matter. We have a heritage. We live in the world that was given to us. Even if I wanted to give my blessings, the fact is Will would have to contend with the judgment of an entire society. . . . And I don't

think I have to tell you, Patrick, it would kill his poor mother."

That is boilerplate southern. If you heard it in a movie you'd hoot. Here is boilerplate New York City:

They dropped me off at the Yale Club, and I watched the cab pull away, feeling the bittersweet loneliness of the city as the champagne faded from the sooty canyon of Vanderbilt Avenue. . . . Someday these would be my streets. Meanwhile, I found myself on Fifth Avenue, moving with a crowd admiring the lavish windows of Saks. . . .

Saks gets fresher stuff from its billing department. "Bittersweet loneliness" is the equivalent of George Bush's "Message: I care." It's stage direction for a bad play.

Whatever McInerney's rank among modern novelists, he has yet to produce a work of real stature. The poet Peter

Davison once remarked, unkindly, that if in McInerney's first novel, *Bright Lights, Big City*, one replaced every use of the word "cocaine" with the word "chocolate," it would be a children's book.

"There is always something," Willie Stark keeps saying to the naive Jack Burden: there are human flaws to be found everywhere, if you look for them hard enough. And Will Savage, ever the watchdog for cultural raids on his southern turf, gives Patrick Keane an early lesson on the right and wrong ways (to paraphrase Isaac Newton) to stand upon the shoulders of giants, so that one might see farther. In the first meeting between the two, after playing several blues records, Savage berates Keane for his naiveté. "When, after the song ended, I ventured that I liked the Beatles, [Will] sneered. 'This is the real thing,' he said. 'At least the Stones acknowledge their sources.'" ☘

omniscient, who slides into big scenes without warning, introduces important information as mere background detail, and arouses sympathy while seeming to cast a cold eye on all the action. Ms. Proulx is a magician.

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Thames and Hudson,
288 pages, \$27.50.

Sophie D. Coe died before completing her engaging history of chocolate, which has been finished by her husband. The book covers archaeological information about the presumed use of chocolate from the Olmec to the Aztecs. The Aztecs flavored it with some surprising substances, and Europeans initially hated it. Sweetening converted them. As the drink spread across Europe, there were fierce debates about its medicinal effects—one school certain that it was a beneficent nutrient, the other denouncing it as sheer poison. There was also ecclesiastic debate as to whether it should be prohibited in Lent. That one was settled fairly quickly: the Jesuits were profitably cultivating and exporting the beans. All of this seems amusingly like our own times, and the Coes tell the story well.

BRIEF REVIEWS



Accordion Crimes

by *E. Annie Proulx.*
Scribner, 381 pages, \$25.00.

"The accordion was so natural, a little friend. Easy and small to carry, easy to play, and loud, and can play bass rhythm and melody. Just the accordion and nothing else and you've got a dance." This is the opinion of a Mexican-American character, but it could just as well have come from any of the immigrant musicians who populate Ms. Proulx's splendid novel. The accordion of the title is an old-style, tenderly handmade instrument brought over from Sicily around 1890. Through murder, theft, carelessness, and even honest purchase, it crisscrosses the country, passed from one ethnic group to another. It enlivens a makeshift beer garden in South Dakota, where the German colony has a hard time during the First World War. It gets to Maine and Texas

and Chicago, where old Mrs. Przybysz, a magnificent cook in the classic Polish style, has a daughter-in-law who makes "a fish shape from cottage cheese, canned tuna and Jell-O, with a black olive eye." Time passes, instruments grow more complicated, and the little old squeeze-box deteriorates from abuse and neglect, but it can still interest a Basque shepherd. The immigrant groups through whose hands it passes also suffer abuse, neglect, and hard luck. They die of poor doctoring and alcohol and unpredictable accidents; their children scatter; their heritage is eroded. Ms. Proulx describes these people and their problems and their stubborn hopes for the future or regrets for the past with extraordinary conviction and a skill peculiarly her own. There appears to be no narrator between the reader and the characters. Here they are---this is what happens to them. Of course there is a narrator, invisible and

The Frog

by *John Hawkes.*
Viking, 208 pages, \$21.95.

Mr. Hawkes's novel concerns a small French boy who obsessively watches a large frog. When he falls asleep beside the pond, the frog invades his stomach, creating a lifetime of grotesque complications. Presumably the arrangement is designed to mean something beyond whimsy—the isolation of the artist, perhaps—but neither the events nor the author's highly mannered style is of much help in determining what that something is.

The Gospel of Corax

by *Paul Park.*
Soho, 320 pages, \$25.00.

Corax, the narrator of Mr. Park's novel, is a second-generation Roman slave who takes advantage of his master's death to run away. He is determined to reach his ancestral country—an India of which he knows only his father's tales. He has an

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abnormally active imagination, a knowledge of languages, herbs, and surgery, and considerable talent as a thief. In Caesarea he encounters Judas ish Kariot—"a spy for Pontius Pilate"—and a group of Jewish rebels, including a large, violent, and seemingly stupid member of a "community of Jewish fanatics and thugs called 'Essenes.'" This fellow, Jeshua, becomes Corax's companion on the long walk to India through the disordered fragments of Alexander's empire. Their adventures are wild, and complicated by the fact that both slide steadily further into mysticism. The novel is continuously interesting both for the lively action and for the historical detail, from political conditions to the names of surgical tools, with which Mr. Park supports his provocative tale.

Houseboat on the Seine

by William Wharton.

Newmarket, 240 pages, \$22.95.

Mr. Wharton bought a fire-damaged houseboat very cheap, repaired it, and decorated it with gold brocade (also very cheap). As a boatman, he hardly knew a binnacle from a belying pin, but he considered that no problem because a houseboat cannot go anywhere. He was wrong. It can go down, and when he took his eye off it, it did. The rescue operation involved two Breton brothers of formidable energy and ingenuity, family, friends, bystanders, and maltreatment of Mrs. Wharton's small English car. Accounts of restoring a damaged dwelling are usually beguiling, and Mr. Wharton's gracefully written memoir is a nice example of the genre. Is it atavistic longing for a better tree that makes such stories appealing?

The Statement

by Brian Moore.

*Dutton/William Abrahams,
250 pages, \$22.95.*

Mr. Moore's novel follows the pattern of manhunt suspense tales but is unusual for the type. The quarry is Pierre Brosard, a Vichy collaborator who has been on the run for forty years. He has been protected by conservative elements in the Catholic Church and by sympathizers in the French government, but times have changed, power has shifted, and when a revengeful Jewish group picks up his trail, his safe places begin to close down.

The chase, while properly exciting, is subordinate to the author's examination of the ethical positions that led decent clerics to defend a bad man and enabled a bad man to indulge in delusions of virtue. The argument is grimly intelligent.

The Hotel in the Jungle

by Albert J. Guerard.

Baskerville, 340 pages, \$23.00.

There was no hotel in 1870, when the first North Americans turned up in a poor village on the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, in Oaxaca, Mexico. One survived, returning in 1922 to find the village adorned with a resort hotel equipped with gamblers, prostitutes, and a Stanley Steamer. The village was still poor sixty years later, when a woman scholar arrived looking for information about her predecessors. The hotel was in bad shape, but the Stanley could still achieve motion, and the abandoned city of Casas Grandes, which all these people were determined to visit, was still sinisterly there, luring travelers into the past. Mr. Guerard mingles real, semi-real, and invented characters, the past and the present, the unchanging jungle and the feeble veneer of progress, to fine effect in a novel that is cleverly designed, expertly written, and unnervingly spooky.

The Dances of Africa

by Michel Huet,

with text by Claude Savary.

Abrams, 172 pages, \$39.95.

Mr. Huet first visited Africa at the end of the Second World War, and has returned many times to photograph what remains of traditional ceremonies. These are rapidly vanishing; in one instance he had to bribe a village to re-create paraphernalia that had been thrown away. His photographs are splendid, delighting the eye with brilliant color and magnificent masks. The text, by Claude Savary, the president of the Swiss Society of African Studies, is an ethnographer's dry once-over-lightly, seldom telling what an unprofessional viewer would like to know—such as why the Samo cover themselves with cowrie shells so completely that they suggest London pearlies, where those shells come from, and who controls what must be an extensive trade in them.

—Phoebe-Lou Adams



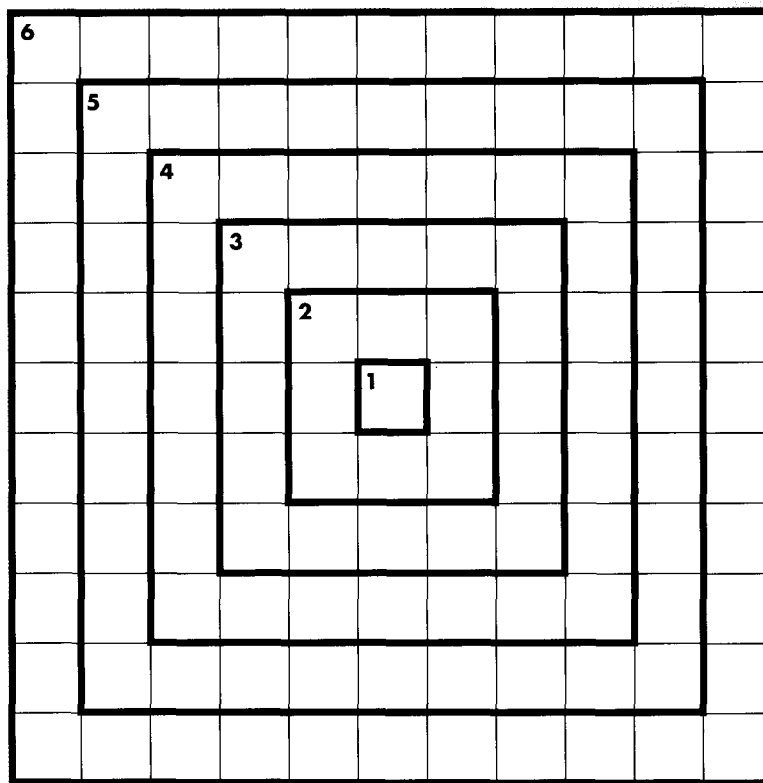
THE PUZZLER

by Emily Cox and Henry Rathvon

Target Practice

Answers to clues are to be entered horizontally and vertically without regard to heavy bars. Each row or column contains two words; rows may total 10 or 11 letters, and columns may total 11 or 12 letters. A row whose entries total 10 letters will have an unused square somewhere in its sequence (it may be anywhere). A column whose entries total 12 letters will have a pair of consecutive letters sharing the same square. A square that's shared in a column will be the same one that's unused in a row; one such square occurs in each of the numbered Rings. Each entry's clue is given under the number of the innermost Ring through which it passes, in no special order within each Ring. When the diagram is completely filled, the results of the Target Practice should be evident. Nine answers are capitalized.

The solution to last month's Puzzler appears on page 107.



Rings

1. a. Shot goes by, making some holes (6)
b. Mark that's left by a black insect (6)
2. a. Otter's tail breaking Polish river's tranquillity (5)
b. Bag male animal on a pole (5)
c. Take first person after one low-ranking officer (6)
d. Thrill is gone after initial bit of excitement (5)
e. Giant insect eating one M&M (7)
f. A morsel that's left on a large vessel (5)
g. Pose in motion, taking a stroll (5)
h. Pause, turning train set the other way (5)
i. Change baby after putting traveling cot in church office (7)
3. a. In "Turnabout," perform in drag for French director (6)
b. Borders of two states (4)
c. Stars showing in comeback of Nicholas Brothers (4)
d. Foremost of executives sure pay dirt—it's not a pretty sight (7)
e. Native American brought back a tuber (4)
f. Cook makes moist crawfishes (4)
g. Knight with strange rod carried by horse on TV (7)
h. Crushing objections withdrawn by crooner (8)
i. Young socialites leading Socialist (4)
4. a. Get rid of water in the ear with a big wad of cotton? (4)
b. Run temperature, and deteriorate (4)
c. Stooge taken in by group of lawyers is lowlife? (6)
d. Engrave in volume, "To a listener" (6)
e. Trifle with English pound, weak after recession (6)
f. Perfectly traps emcee with prowler? (6)
g. Speaker adjusted to roar (6)
h. Equal ear given in hearing for baseball player (6) (*two words*)
5. a. Choice of colors permitted in poll (7)
b. Republican printed in pink pen (6)
c. Going before thin, otherwise excellent queen (7)
d. Copper and trace of magnesium in spice (5)
e. Instrument operator in back of room (5)
f. Fat, like Ernest of CW music? (5)
g. Rock auditioned for part (4)
h. *Boys Town* actor is one interrupting Mr. Rogers (6)
6. a. Yawning through *Maude* episode (4)
b. Go on and on about silly Dot's car (7)
c. New York town in Mailer novel (6)
d. Porches with sags? (6)
e. Played a recording about return of visitor from outer space (5)
f. Fleet gray bats describing circles (6)
g. A sailor and I forming electronic game company, once (5)
h. Did away with mess (4)

Note: The instructions above are for this month's puzzle only. It is assumed that you know how to decipher clues. For a complete introduction to clue-solving, send an addressed, stamped long envelope to The Atlantic Puzzler, 745 Boylston Street, Boston, Mass. 02116.

WORD COURT

by Barbara Wallraff



Of late I have been meeting up with the use of thanks to in contexts like these: "A three-stall car wash was missing one wall thanks to the rushing waters of the Delaware" and "We will continue to have . . . escalating crime thanks to children who grow up in combat zones." These may not be grammatical errors but they strike me as illogical uses of the phrase. What-ever happened to due to?

J. Nina Lieberman
Woodstock, N.Y.

Where blame is more to the point than gratitude, *thanks to* is indeed out of place. However, there are traditional limits on the use of *due to* that keep it from being an all-purpose solution to the problem. A noun is allowed to be *due to* a noun ("The need to repair the car wash is due to the storm"), but a clause may not be *due to* a noun ("The car wash needs repairs due to the storm"). It's usually possible to revise one's sentence to conform to the rule. But changing *due to*—or *thanks to*—to *owing to* or *because of* is almost always the simplest solution.

Why is *owing to* allowed where *due to* is not? It has been in use much longer in such prepositional contexts, *due* having been nothing more than an ordinary adjective ("Repairs are certainly due") a century ago. Those precisians who fifty or thirty years ago denounced the preposition *due to* as an arriviste have tainted its reputation.

After a waiter sets a plate of food before me at a restaurant, the last word to leave his mouth before he walks away is "Enjoy!" This seems to be catching on everywhere. I went to the doctor for a pulled tendon. Hand-

ing me a prescription and my bill, he said, "Enjoy!" Isn't enjoy, when used in the imperative, a reflexive verb requiring a pronoun or noun, as in Enjoy yourself?

Steve Saunders
Oxford, Conn.

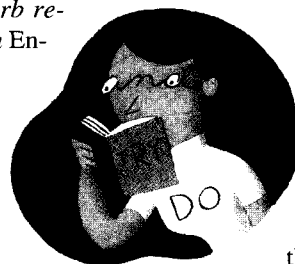
What if the waiter said "Enjoy your meal"? This perfectly correct sentence establishes that *enjoy* can be used transitively (with a direct object), as well as in the reflexive way (with a direct object that is the same as the subject) that you note. The *Oxford English Dictionary* gives several citations for intransitive uses as well, including an evocative one from 1549 that reads, "Yet he neuer enioied after, but in conclusyon pitifully wasted his painful lyfe."

Grammar, then, isn't the problem. Could the problem be that the waiter is telling you what to do? And that you consider it the restaurant's job to provide an enjoyable experience and your prerogative to decide whether the restaurant has succeeded? And that it therefore seems presumptuous for an employee to be commanding you, "Enjoy!"? As for your doctor, could the problem be that you really would have been interested to know which he expected you to enjoy: the pulled tendon or paying the bill? But now we have strayed into the realm of psychology, and that's not my department.

My boss and I have a recurring battle over the use of try and, which she insists should be try to. She contends that to try and do something means to achieve the goal, and is therefore incorrect; but to try to do something doesn't predict success and is therefore proper. I argue that to try and do something clearly indicates one's

hope for success, and is therefore proper. Who is right?

Steve Bone
Halifax, N.S.



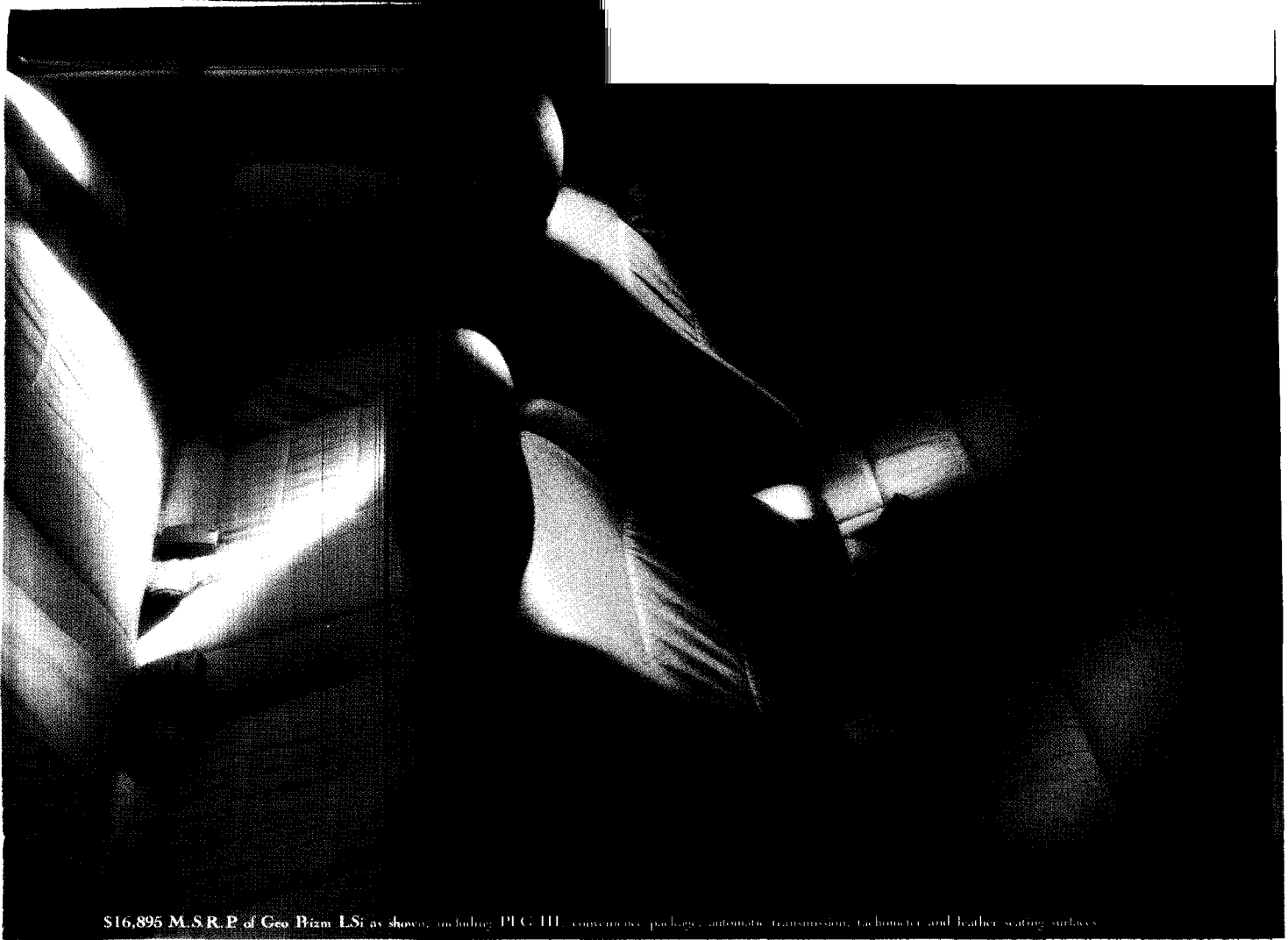
You are—and won't the boss be surprised when you casually remark, one day soon, that try and do better and the like are examples of hendiadys, a device that was not infrequently used as a poetic ornament in Greek and Latin. Hendiadys, as H. W. Fowler explains it, is "the expressing of a compound notion by giving its two constituents as though they were independent and connecting them with a conjunction instead of subordinating one to the other." *Nice and warm* (as against *nicely warm*) is another example Fowler gives of the device as it crops up in English.

I have assembled quite a stack of newspaper and magazine clippings that employ the phrase "high school degree." It annoys me very much when I see this instead of "high school diploma." I didn't know that high schools were degree-granting institutions.

Betty D. Krueger
Sarasota, Fla.

Good point. I suspect this is one of the many things that aren't being taught in high school anymore. And while we're at it: another reader, Irene Slaughter, of Asheville, North Carolina, has written to object to "She graduated high school"—also a good point. *Graduate* may be transitive ("The school graduated her with honors") but the graduating institution isn't allowed to be the object of the verb.

Have you recently had a language dispute that you would like this column to resolve? Write to Word Court in care of *The Atlantic Monthly*, 745 Boylston Street, Boston, MA 02116, or send E-mail to MsGrammar@TheAtlantic.com. All letters become the property of Word Court.



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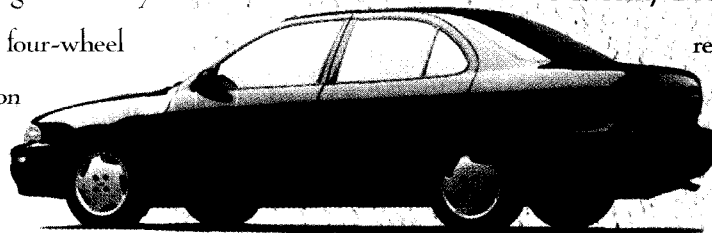
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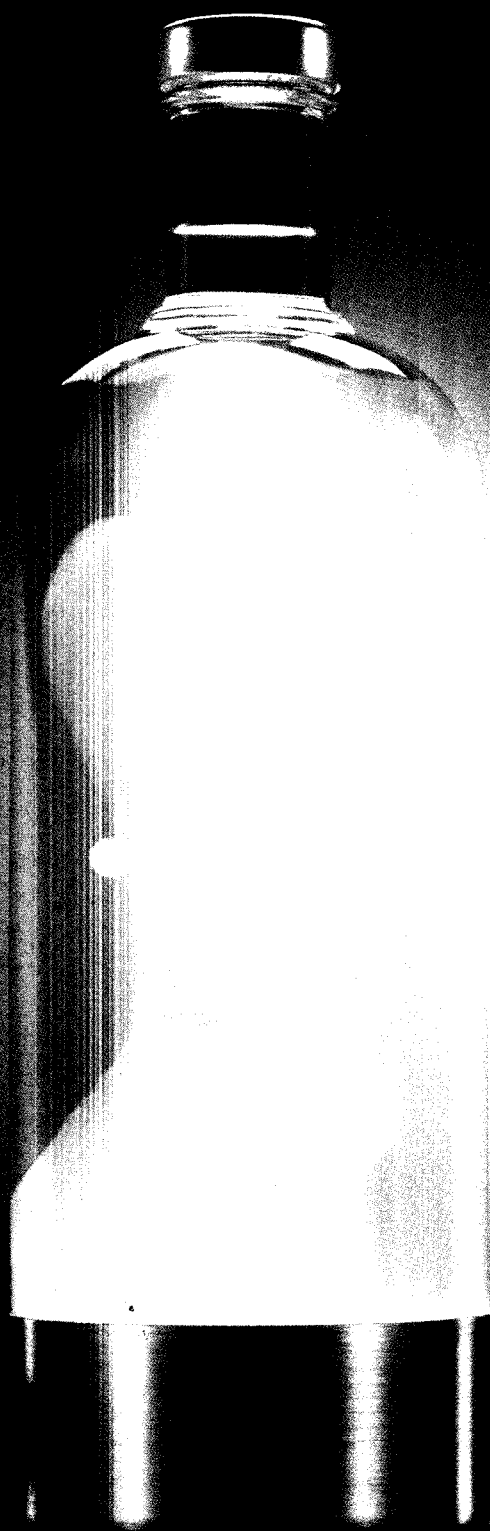


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